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in Disney's *Moana* and *Pocahontas*”

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1 Introduction

The Walt Disney Company has been producing entertainment for over 80 years and is among the most influential media companies reaching millions not only in the USA but globally (Ward 1; Dreier 244). The worldwide box office results of *Moana* (2016), for instance, amount to a total gross of \$643.331.111 ("*Moana*" *Box Office Mojo*). Disney's animations and cartoons do not merely tell delightful stories but shape expectations of how the world should be, regarding aspects ranging from the function of the family and expected gender-roles to ideas about social justice and conceptions of different cultures and ethnicities. Among Disney's main audiences are children, who are especially susceptible to the values, norms and stereotypes transported by the company's fairytales (Lippi-Green 104). Remarking on the tremendous impact of animated movies by Disney and other studios on children, Giroux goes so far as to argue that "these films inspire at least as much cultural authority and legitimacy for teaching specific roles, values, and ideals as more traditional sites of learning such as public schools, religious institutions, and the family" (84). Since Disney has such an extensive reach and enormous influence on shaping the worldview of its young audience, it is especially important to critically consider what messages these films convey, which I will proceed to do with regards to the representation of indigenous people.

With my study, I follow in the footsteps of previous researchers, who have critically analyzed the messages transported by Disney movies (Ward; Fruzińska). The aspect of gender has been studied extensively (Streiff and Dundes; Limbach). In recent years, also the representation of race, ethnicity and culture has received much attention (Macleod; Lacroix; Di Giovanni). Following the release of *Pocahontas* (1995), numerous academics have focused on Disney's representation of Native Americans (Naidu Parekh; Jhappan and Stasiulis). With the release of *Moana* (2016) twenty-one years later, indigenous people prominently appear yet again in the form of a Polynesian princess and her tribe. Since *Moana* was released only recently, it has received comparatively little critical attention.

Nevertheless, the modes of representation of indigeneity in *Moana* merit a thorough analysis, which is the purpose of this thesis. I will not consider *Moana* in and of its own, however, but analyze *Pocahontas* as well and draw comparisons between these two

movies to examine changes and consistent patterns in Disney's representations of indigeneity in the course of more than two decades. Hence, this thesis focuses on the question of how indigenous people are represented in *Moana* and *Pocahontas* and explores the functions of these specific representations. In accordance with Berkhofer, one of the leading scholars regarding representations of Native Americans, my hypothesis is that the image of the Native American serves the "polemical and creative needs of Whites" and vacillates between 'noble and ignoble', depending on the prevailing "acceptance or critique of White civilization" (71). Thus, the underlying assumption of my research is that in both movies indigenous peoples are positioned as stereotypical Other, in contrast to the Western Self, and that the analysis of the construct of the indigenous Other will afford insights into Western self-conceptions. When using the term "West" in this thesis, I am not referring to its geographical meaning but rather applying it in the sense of Hall, namely as a concept denoting a form of "a society that is developed, industrialized, urbanized, capitalist, secular, and modern" (*West* 277).

My perspective regarding representations of indigeneity is influenced by the theoretical approaches of stereotyping and othering. Additionally, I base my study on insights of the discipline of imagology and adopt its constructivist view on national and ethnic characterizations. In the second chapter I will, therefore, present these three different approaches and bring them into conjunction within a single theoretical framework. Additionally, I will discuss the term "indigeneity". The third chapter on methodology serves as the foundation for answering the question how the indigenous Other is represented. Besides clarifying how I will proceed in the film analysis, I will discuss the approach of compositional analysis, which I will use to explore *Moana* and *Pocahontas* in more detail. In the fourth chapter, I will conduct an intertextual analysis by tracing how Native Americans and Polynesians have been represented in the history of Western literature and film. In the intertextual analysis I will not only discuss prominent tropes, such as that of the 'noble- and ignoble savage', but also prevalent patterns and motives of representing indigeneity, explore how these representations vacillated and explain the causes for these fluctuations. Overall, the intertextual analysis will help to locate depictions of the indigenous Other in *Pocahontas* and *Moana* in a wider context. Thereby, I will be able to discuss where and how the portrayal of indigenous peoples in *Moana* and *Pocahontas* deviates from or adheres to traditional Western discourses on indigeneity. My hypothesis is that representations of aboriginals will emulate

historically accumulated tropes of 'noble and ignoble savages' and only deviate slightly by corresponding to contemporary concerns and cultural sensibilities. The film analysis will eventually be conducted in the fifth chapter. I will briefly analyze and compare the plots of *Pocahontas* and *Moana*, before exploring the characters and the composition of both films. In a last step, I will focus on the forms and functions of the specific representations of the indigenous Other. I assume that the indigenous Other will serve as contrast for the Western Self and will be employed as a screen onto which Western concerns and fantasies can be projected. In this sense, I expect that alienation from modernity and worries about ecological destruction might manifest themselves in idealization of indigenous ways of life.

2 Theoretical Framework

This thesis is based on three theoretical approaches, namely imagology, stereotyping and othering, which I will attempt to bring into synthesis with each other in this chapter. Each of these approaches can be regarded as a conceptual lens providing a specific angle for analyzing the object of interest of this thesis, the representation of indigenous peoples.

Stereotyping research, anchored in the field of psychology, provides the superstructure and helps to explain general aspects of stereotyping such as the generation of group identity and the maintenance of social order.

Imagology, rooted in comparative literature, offers important findings regarding the structure of ethnotypes, which are a subcategory and specific form of stereotypes concerning conceptions about nations and ethnicities. Besides the imagological grammar of national and ethnic characterization, it is the constructivist position as well as the methodology of imagology that I will apply in my analysis of stereotypical representations.

Othering, rooted in post-colonial- and gender studies, emphasizes aspects which are sometimes neglected in stereotype research. Othering provides a focus on the power-relation between Self and Other and is helpful for gaining insights about the stereotyping subject and its dependence on the Other and helps understanding the projection of desires and fantasies of the Self onto the Other.

In a first step, I will present the historical development and current tenets of imagology as this serves to clarify my own position regarding the study of representations. Then, I will consider stereotyping in general and ethnotyping in particular before presenting theoretical insights of othering.

2.1 Imagology

2.1.1 The Historical Development of Imagology

Imagology aims to examine the genesis, development, and effect of national images in literature (Florack, *Nationale* 16; Dyserinck 131). Ascribing nations with specific characterizations can be traced back to antiquity, to ethnographic reports of Herodotus (Chew 180). In early-modern Europe, classifications of peoples according to their *national character* increased immensely (Leerssen, *Method* 17). The Austrian *Völkertafel* from the first half of the 18th century, for instance, systematically categorizes and compares nations according to their properties, customs, and manners (Zeman 104-105). The character of the French, for instance, is summarized as friendly and communicative while the character of Turks is labeled as deceitful. The *Völkertafel*, hence, demonstrates a prevalent belief in fixed national temperament, a belief which permeated discourses ranging from arts and entertainment to political philosophy. Montesquieu, for instance, even linked systems of governance to certain nations regarding the Chinese as destined for despotism (Chew 181; Lottes 77-78). The 19th and early 20th century saw the rise of Social Darwinism, which was grounded in the belief of the essentialist nature of national and 'racial' character (Chew 181). The existence of particular national characters was long accepted as a given in proto-imagological studies, which aimed at establishing an inventory of national temperaments, which at that time was assumed to be 'descriptive' and 'objectively' verifiable (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 14).

The terms 'descriptive' and 'objective' merit special attention. The long prevalent assumptions that national characters can be objectively described, neatly categorized and compared are heavily criticized by numerous contemporary scholars of stereotype theory, imagology and cultural theory. Adopting a constructivist perspective, Leerssen challenges the position that the description of national temperament is a "mimetic derivative of real-world facts" and rather argues that "[r]epresentations of national character [...] cannot be empirically measured against an objectively existing *signifié*" (*Ethnicity* 14-16). Similarly, Pickering warns from the naïve belief that "media discourse simply reflects an objectively given social reality and misrepresentation is [...] an obvious distortion of that objective reality" (xiii). Instead, drawing attention to the constructive nature of stereotypical representations, Pickering states that they "operate

as a means of evaluatively placing, and attempting to fix in place, other people or cultures from a particular and privileged perspective” (47). I share Leerssen’s and Pickering’s perspective and understand national and cultural representations as discursive constructs separate from a supposedly ‘objective reality’. Nevertheless, I believe that such representations can have real-life consequences, which makes their deconstruction crucial.

Deconstructing and analyzing national characterizations became a central objective of imagology after the detrimental impact of World War II. Modern imagology emerged, skeptical of the ‘objective reality’ previously ascribed to national temperament (Leerssen, *Method* 21). In its current state, imagology examines national characterizations from an anti-essentialist standpoint and views national images as discursive constructs (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 21-23). Adhering to a constructivist paradigm, scholars of imagology abandon the essentialist term national character and substitute it with *national stereotype*, attempting to stress the constructed character of the object of analysis (Chew 179-180). Imagologists increased emphasis on deconstruction is accompanied by a focus on the role that national stereotypes play regarding identity-formation, specifically for related phenomena such as nationalism and ethnocentrism (Leerssen *Ethnicity* 22-23).

As can be noted when considering the term national stereotype, the concept of the nation is still central to imagology. The reason for this is that imagology developed in Europe and was initially – and in many instances still is – concerned with the analysis of how one nation is represented in the literature of another nation (Perner 31). This reliance on the concept of the nation has been criticized by Perner as contributing to the reification of the idea of the nation, which appears paradoxical, since imagology aims at deconstructing national stereotypes and at transcending nationalist thought patterns (32). This critique has been incorporated into the further development of the discipline by Leerssen. Leerssen employs the term *ethnotype*, a subcategory of the stereotype at the same level as stereotypes of class, age and gender, to refer to stereotypical images or representations of national and ethnic character (*Ethnicity* 16). The use of *ethnotype* reflects a post-nationalist broadening of the imagological focus which aims to analyze not only the representation of nations but that of ethnicities as well. Leerssen acknowledges that “the nation-state is no longer the self-evident

category it used to be [...] [and] that state and 'nation' or ethnicity almost never map congruently onto each other" (*Ethnicity* 28).

Since Leerssen's use of "nation" and "ethnicity" is relatively vague, I will clarify my understanding of both concepts at this point. Anthony Smith views "ethnicity" as "a type of cultural collectivity" based on:

1. collective proper name
2. a myth of common ancestry
3. shared historical memory
4. one or more differentiating elements of common culture
5. an association with a specific 'homeland'
6. a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population (20-21)

"Solidarity for significant sectors of the population" means that the supposed 'bond' that is believed to unite distinct members of an ethnicity appears to be stronger than persisting differences regarding aspects such as gender or socioeconomic status (A. Smith 21). Thus, inequality within an ethnic community is frequently deemed less relevant than common ethnic identity and does not obstruct mobilization for a common ethnic cause (Anderson 7, Nielsen 137-38). Labeling people as 'possessing' an ethnic identity is certainly problematic, since it naturalizes differences (Miles and Brown 95). In this light, Eriksen proposes to use "ethnicity" as a relational concept and views it as "an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction" (12). When referring to "ethnicity" in this thesis, I understand it not as the 'property' of a group but as socially constructed in this interactive and relational sense.

"Ethnicity" and "nation" are closely connected concepts and overlap in various areas. Anthony Smith defines the nation as "a named human population sharing an [sic] historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (14). As can be seen, Smith's definition of "nation" contains the characteristics of "ethnicity" but surpasses "ethnicity" by adding economic, legal and political aspects by presuming that a community of specific territory is politically organized (Miles and Brown 142). This aspect of political sovereignty distinguishes nations from ethnicities, which can but need not be politically autonomous (A. Smith 39).

Similarities between “ethnicity” and “nation” arise regarding their constructed character and the emphasis on distinction. Anderson defines the nation as “an imagined political community” since a common bond is envisioned despite the impossibility of one person knowing all other members of the nation (6). Hence, Anderson perceives nations as cultural constructs, which, as I argued above, also applies to ethnic communities. Both, “nation” and “ethnicity”, rely on a contrast with other nations and ethnicities. In order to create and sustain a national or ethnic identity, particularities of one’s own community need to be emphasized and contrasted with other entities (Miles and Brown 145). Consequently, processes of ethnic- and national identity construction tend to be accompanied by images of Self and Other, which imagology aims to analyze.

Having considered the concepts of “ethnicity” and “nation”, I will now explain how I will apply imagological findings in this thesis. I will partly follow the new imagological perspective promoted by Leerssen, as I focus on the analysis of ethnotypes of indigenous peoples. In this way, I will not solely rely on the concept of “nation” but also heed Leerssen’s advice to adopt a global approach and transcend a purely intra-European focus by analyzing representations of Native Americans and Polynesians (*Ethnicity* 27-28). Additionally, the imagological perspective I apply in this paper is not limited to literature, the traditional medium of imagology. Instead I will analyze filmic representations. This might appear unconventional; however, my approach corresponds to recent developments in imagology. Considering the increasing relevance of film, Leerssen also analyzes this medium in one of his latest surveys, demonstrating that imagological methods can be applied to audiovisual sources (Leerssen, *Stranger*). Since films are prone to contain ethnotypes and have a considerable range of influence, applying imagology to Disney movies, as I will do in this thesis, appears to be justified.

2.1.2 The Tenets and Methodology of Imagology

Imagology provides fruitful insights into the structure of ethnotypes as well as methodological propositions. The most crucial imagological findings regarding the mechanisms of ethnotyping, such as antithetical structure, emphasis on particularity and diachronic fluctuation, will be presented further below. At this point, I will limit myself to providing a concise overview of the tenets as well as some methodological approaches of imagology.

Florack identifies three main assumptions of imagology, which, in my opinion, are valid for stereotyping and othering as well and which also apply to my approach in this thesis. These assumptions are that texts are able to convey coherent images of nations and peoples, that these images are not solely representative of the text's author but of a larger collective, and that the image of the other nation is related reciprocally to the image of one's own nation (Florack, *Nationale* 17).

A further essential presupposition of the discipline of imagology is that ethnotypes are not to be analyzed regarding their validity, since the degree of accuracy cannot be determined (Leerssen, *Summary*). Referring to stereotyping, Pickering likewise argues that it is impossible to determine the truthfulness of stereotypes and that endeavors to ascertain whether a 'kernel of truth' exists might even serve to perpetuate stereotypes:

It is pointless trying to gauge whether [stereotypes] are accurate. What counts is how they circulate, and with what consequences, as base coins in the economy of discourse and representation; how they attain their symbolic currency among those involved in their exchange. (Pickering 25-26)

While ethnotypes may not correspond to reality, the belief in ethnotypes can have real and sometimes detrimental consequences (Leerssen, *Summary*; Dyserinck 129-130). Rather than investigating the degree of truthfulness, imagology focuses on the recognizability of ethnotypes.

Ethnotypes tend to move beyond an individual text and can be conceptualized as intertextual constructs (Schweinitz 40). Therefore, an investigation of the textual tradition of ethnotypes should stand at the beginning of an imagological study, followed by the contextual- and textual analysis. (Leerssen, *Summary*). Leerssen presupposes that national and ethnic characterizations are disseminated mainly intertextually through repetition and hearsay instead of being based on empirical observations (Leerssen, *Method* 26). Accordingly, "[t]he characterological profile of a given ethnotype is the end result of a long accumulation of individual textual instances, and this accumulation in turn is the sounding board against which the individual instance reverberates" (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 20). Thus, the analysis of the development of the ethnotype in question along with possible diachronic variations in preceding texts is essential for understanding an ethnotype's current manifestation. In the case of this study, I will investigate ethnotypes regarding Polynesians and Native Americans as they have been described in discourses since the first cross-cultural encounters. For this purpose, I will first trace the vacillations of the contradicting tropes of 'noble- and

ignoble savage' in literary accounts such as travelogues, philosophical treatises and novels as well as in filmic representations.

Since texts are influenced by the origin and time of their production and reception, the social, political, and historical context of a given text and its ethnotypes should be incorporated into an analysis as a second step (Leerssen, *Method* 28; *Ethnicity* 20). Due to the limited scope of this paper, however, I will not dedicate an independent chapter to the contextual analysis but rather refer to the context of the films during my analysis when needed.

The third and final phase consists of the textual analysis, which concerns the text in which the ethnotypes occur. Questions regarding genre-conventions and the functions of ethnotypes within the text, as for instance the contrast of the Other with an implied self-image, need to be posed (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 21).

Having considered principles and methods as well as crucial findings of imagology I will provide an overview of the characteristics and functions of stereotypes in the subsequent section, then consider ethnotyping before eventually presenting the concept of othering.

2.2 Stereotyping

2.2.1 The Characteristics of Stereotypes

The term *stereotype* originated in the 18th century when it denoted a printing plate that was used for replicating texts (Woodward-Smith 222). In its social-psychological form it was first introduced by Lippmann in 1922 and since then has been developed further by various disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, and media studies, acquiring various different meanings in the process (Pickering 9). One of the most frequently cited definitions stems from Allport, who regards a stereotype as “an exaggerated belief associated with a category” (191). Similarly, Berg defines a stereotype as “a negative generalization used by an in-group (Us) about an out-group (Them)” (15). Both definitions reveal one typical attribute of stereotypes, namely that they tend to overstate and simplify complexities. Berg’s definition is useful to the extent that it alludes to the effect of stereotypes of constructing distinctive group identities. However, it needs to be emphasized that although stereotypes are frequently used for negative reference

to out-groups, also positive stereotypes exist. Allied collectives and the in-group tend to be stereotyped positively and can, for instance, be perceived with reverence (Dovidio and Gaertner 1085).

Stereotypes are characterized by their stability and resistance to change. According to Hall, “stereotyping reduces people to a few simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature” (*Spectacle* 257). This means that differences are naturalized through stereotypes and are made to appear as if they were unalterable, which serves the ideological function of sustaining and justifying existing relations of power (Hall, *Spectacle* 245, 259). Ethnicities are frequently stereotypically represented with negative attributes which serves to maintain the hegemony of ruling groups. Native Americans, for instance, were frequently labeled as idle, which served as a welcome pretext for expelling them from their territory during colonial times (Crang 65-66). Presently, stereotypes of ‘lazy’ Native Americans are used for explaining their lower socio-economic status in comparison to white Americans (Miheuah 120).

Stereotypes are based on a limited number of distinct characteristics which are implemented to describe a group that is constructed as homogeneous in the process (Berg 16). Furthermore, stereotypes are usually not based on first-hand experience but are communicated and shared within a collective. Additionally, stereotypes tend to be attached to emotions and frequently are involved in the process of making judgements. Due to the simplification of stereotypes and their habitual, unthinking use, however, such judgements tend to be obscured (Schweinitz 5).

2.2.2 The Functions of Stereotypes

As demonstrated by this description, stereotypes appear to have many negative consequences, primarily for unfavorably and stereotypically depicted groups which might experience negative treatment culminating in discrimination or even persecution. Also, the groups or people who stereotype tend to be affected adversely since their judgement is clouded and their worldview becomes limited in this process (Pickering 10). Yet, stereotyping occurs in a multitude of contexts and according to Berg nobody is exempted from stereotyping (14). Although they tend to have negative impacts, it appears that stereotypes perform important functions. At the personal level, stereotypes fulfill the cognitive function of ordering the world through simplification and

categorization, thereby “substituting order for the great blooming, buzzing confusion of reality” (Lippmann 96). Lipman’s use of ‘reality’ appears to presuppose that an ‘absolute order’ exists in the world which can be accessed by humans. I want to distance myself from this perception, as I doubt that such a direct form of access to reality is possible for human beings. Nevertheless, I believe that stereotypes perform a basic cognitive function by affording a possible way for structuring and interpreting the great amount of incoming data. At the social level stereotypes

(a) help to explain large-scale social events (such as war and peace, persecution and tolerance, disadvantage and privilege), (b) serve to justify the activities of groups as they relate to those events (e.g., attacking an enemy, funding an aid programme, collecting and distributing taxes), and (c) contribute to a process of positive intergroup *differentiation* whereby stereotypes strive to represent their ingroup as different from, and better than, outgroups. (Haslam et al. 162)

Thus, stereotyping can be seen as essential for processes of group-formation and as contributing to the cohesion of groups at the expense of excluding others. According to Hall, stereotypes help to preserve the social and symbolic order (*Spectacle* 258). With stereotypes boundaries which delineate what is normal and what is abnormal, deviant and undesirable are created and maintained. Those who belong, the in-group, are thereby clearly demarcated and constituted in contrast to those who do not belong and hence need to be excluded. I agree with Dyer who summarizes that “the role of stereotypes is to make visible the invisible, so that there is no danger of it creeping up on us unawares; and to make fast, firm and separate what is in reality fluid and much closer to the norm than the dominant value system cares to admit” (16).

As stereotypes serve to create in- and out-groups and help to rationalize their relationship and the treatment of those designated outside, they are closely connected to the aspect of power (Hall, *Spectacle* 258). Berger and Luckman pointedly state that “he who has the bigger stick has the better chance of imposing his definitions of reality”, which in this context means imposing stereotypes (127). This statement addresses the fact that groups tend to be related hierarchically. Dominant groups have the ability of exerting more influence on discourses, thereby defining the norm and the perception of those stereotyped. By constructing the difference of other people as natural and inevitable, the dominant group is engaged in attempts to fix the power-relationship and to legitimize it (Hall, *Spectacle* 259).

In this thesis, I will rely on Hall's definition of stereotyping as a practice that "reduces people to a few, simple, essential characteristics, which are represented as fixed by Nature" (*Spectacle* 257). I also agree with Pickering, who argues that categories are essential for processing complex data, yet emphasizes that stereotypes are distinct from simple, 'neutral' categories since they constitute "one-sided representations" which function to maintain social hierarchies and inequality (2-3).

While I believe that all humans stereotype, I also think that awareness of stereotyping can be fostered and that knowledge about stereotyping in combination with self-reflection can be helpful in recognizing and resisting, at times, one's own engagement in stereotyping practices. In this spirit, I aim at contributing to the deconstruction of stereotypes regarding indigenous peoples with this study. I will mainly focus on the social dimension of stereotypes when examining the role of stereotypes for identity-construction. This enterprise will be enhanced through additional insights regarding othering and ethnotyping, which I will present below.

2.3 Ethnotyping

After this overview on stereotyping, I will now turn to the central object of analysis of imagology and of this thesis: the *ethnotype*. Although Leerssen mainly formulates findings on ethnotypes with reference to nation-states, he emphasizes that ethnotypes can also be employed when analyzing relations between inhabitants of distinct regions within nations as well as relations between different ethnic groups (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 18). In my opinion, Leerssen's principal use of the concept of ethnotype in the context of nations can be interpreted as a relic of the imagological tradition. The main idea, however, appears to be that ethnotypes can be applied as an analytical concept to all forms of contact between groups which are constructed as culturally, nationally, or ethnically distinct.

Ethnotypes are characterized by an antithetical structure which can be either implicit or explicit. In this sense, they contrast the in-group with the out-group. Ethnotypes work by taking a feature of a nation or ethnicity that is considered particular and remarkable. The distinguishing feature is then emphasized and presented as typical of the nation or ethnicity in question, while common features and similarities are ignored. In the

process, the entity characterized in this manner is differentiated artificially from others (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 17). Polygamy and monogamy, for example, might be constructed as such exceptional features. They might serve to emphasize the difference of an Arab country in comparison with Sweden. However, if two European countries, for instance Sweden and Austria, are compared, the feature of monogamy loses this defining function and is substituted by another differentiating element. Ultimately, ethnotyping functions under “the assumption that a nation is most characteristically itself in precisely those aspects in which its most different from others” (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 17).

While ethnotypes aim to fix particular attributes of nations or ethnicities as unchanging and natural truths, oscillations in the representation of nations and ethnicities tend to occur frequently over time. Sometimes the represented image of a nation is replaced by a completely contrary counterimage. This is the case for Germany, whose historical image fluctuated between admiration and depreciation. At one time, Germany was perceived as a country of ingenious philosophers and scientist, at another time as a nation of ruthless technocrats. In both instances, the underlying notion was that Germans are systematic (Leerssen, *Method* 29). In the case of the representation of Native Americans recurrent shifts between the image of ‘ignoble- and noble savage’ can be observed (Leerssen, *Method* 343). The coexistence of various, at times even contrasting images about nations or ethnicities is quite common. Leerssen uses the term *imageme* to refer to the conglomerate of contradicting images. The fact that images of a nation or ethnicity exist alongside their counterimages means that they are difficult if not impossible to falsify (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 18).

Whether ethnotypes are attributed with negative or positive values depends on the relationship between the collectives. If the relationship between two groups is harmonious, ethnotypes will tend to be less negatively pronounced. At times of conflict ethnotyping increases and ethnotypes become more depreciative. Thus, depending on the social and political context a certain image might be replaced by a contrasting image or the same image can be valued differently at different times (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 19). This second phenomenon is illustrated through the case of Native Americans, who were represented negatively as uncivilized, cruel, and brutal savages at the beginning of colonialism when competition between colonizers and natives for resources was severe (Berkhofer 19). However, when Native Americans were not

perceived as a threat for colonizers any longer and were increasingly perceived as a vanishing 'race', the savageness attributed to Native Americans became revalorized positively. Under the influence of Romanticism, rather than being interpreted as negative, the absence of elements of Western civilization was perceived as a sign of authenticity and proximity to nature. In this way, 'noble savages' were viewed as not having been corrupted by the forces of civilization (Leerssen, *Method* 343).

Three oppositional patterns that govern ethnotyping are the contrasts between North and South, center and periphery, and strong and weak nations and ethnicities (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 18). Firstly, the North-South opposition is based on the belief that the climate and the physical environment of a region influence the character of its inhabitants (Zacharasiewicz 31). Typically, a cool temperament is ascribed to the North and a warm temperament to the South. In this sense, northern collectives are commonly characterized as individualist, rough, cognitive, less agreeable but more reliable, introverted, unimaginative, and stoic. Additionally, Northerners are associated with entrepreneurial spirit, egalitarianism and democratic principles. In contrast, Southerners tends to be perceived as collectivist, sensual, emotional, more charming but less reliable, extroverted, impulsive, and as placing high emphasis on hierarchical structures and aristocracy (Leerssen, *Rhetoric* 276). Secondly, the contrast between center and periphery depicts the center as modern, dynamic, active and with a fast pace of life. On the other hand, the periphery is imagined as traditional, static, with a slow pace and close to nature (Leerssen, *Rhetoric* 277). Thirdly, the opposition of weak versus strong describes a pattern that typically consists of the characterization of nations or ethnicities with considerable political power with ruthlessness and cruelty. In contrast, powerless nations or ethnicities are frequently ethnotyped as harmless and exotic (Leerssen, *Ethnicity* 18). If a change in the power status of a nation or ethnicity occurs, this is often accompanied by a transformation of ethnotypes. Taking Native Americans as an example, Bird notes that "[o]nce Indians were no longer a threat, they became colorful and quaint" (4).

The findings on the structure of ethnotypes presented above contribute to a better understanding of their form and function and their diachronic variation. I will resort to these insights in my intertextual analysis and will use them to explain and locate the ethnotypes resurfacing in *Moana* and *Pocahontas*. To gain a better understanding of the role ethnotypes play for the in-group, I will now turn to othering.

2.4 Othering

The concept of *the Other* was introduced by Beauvoir in 1949 and since then has become an important tool of analysis in post-colonial theory (Brons 69). The process of othering is closely related to stereotyping and ethnotyping as it also evaluatively labels, homogenizes and essentializes other people and distinguishes them as different and deviating from the norm (Mountz 328). Using the notion of the Other for analysis, however, has the increased advantage of availing a stronger focus not only on the object who is othered but also on the subject doing the othering since “the Other reveals far more about the ‘self’ [...] than about the apparently all-determined Other” (Pickering 74). Additionally, by applying the concept of othering the power relationship between subject and object comes into the foreground. This becomes possible since othering avails a strong focus regarding the question of who constructs the Other and for what purposes. Othering also foregrounds aspects of the process, such as objectification of the Other and effects of such an external definition on the Other as well as the role of fetishism and validation for the Self among other factors (Pickering 69, 73-74).

Brons describes othering as

the simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through identification of some desirable characteristic that the self/in-group has and the other/out-group lacks and/or some undesirable characteristic that the other/out-group has and the self/in-group lacks. Othering thus sets up a superior self/in-group in contrast to an inferior other/out-group, but this superiority/inferiority is nearly always left implicit. (70)

As can be seen in this definition, othering is a process involved in the construction of identities. In the process of othering identities are related to each other. The Self is defined in relation to the Other and in fact depends on the Other (Crang 59). In order to conceive of Self and Other, differences need to be emphasized and symbolic boundaries are erected. Differences are portrayed as natural in the process of othering and thereby are masked and almost made invisible, which is the considerable task that othering accomplishes (Pickering 70). When the Other's difference is contrasted with the Self, usually in the form of binary-pairs such as modern/backwards, the Self constitutes the dominant pole deriving legitimacy from the inferior Other (Jensen 65).

In this process, the Self is taken as the normative center against which the Other is compared, marked as deviant and excluded (Mountz 328). Hence, othering, like stereotyping, functions by “distancing of what is peripheral, marginal and incidental from a cultural norm, of illicit danger from safe legitimacy” (Jordanova 109). Hall describes this process as construction of symbolic boundaries, which are necessary for the maintenance of a stable culture but nevertheless may have the effect of making the Other alluring and symbolically centered (*Spectacle* 237).

As noted previously, the Self is typically regarded as superior in comparison with the inferior Other (Jensen 65). One familiar structure frequently encountered is the crude contrast “they are bad, we are good” (Baumann 19). This binary structure can be expanded to include, for instance, “they are heathen, we are pious”, “they are lazy, we are industrious”, or “they are savage, we are civilized”. Analyzing Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, Baumann identifies that the binary structures inherent in othering can be far more complex (20). In what he calls “The Grammar of Reverse Mirror-Imaging” positive aspects of the Self can be contrasted with negative aspects of the Other but additionally, negative aspects of the Self can also be opposed with positive aspects of the Other. This can be summarized as “what is good in us is (still) bad in them, but what got twisted in us (still) remains straight in them” (Baumann 20). Consequently, othering is not limited to the disparaging characterization of the Other but frequently includes the expression of desires about the Other based on the critique of the Self. According to Baumann, xenophobia and xenophilia are, then, two sides of the same coin (21).

With the two following quotes about African Americans as Others in the United States I will further illustrate the Janus-face quality of othering:

Africanism is the vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; not repulsive, but desirable; not helpless, but licensed and powerful; not a blind accident of evolution but a progressive fulfilment of destiny. (Morrison 53).

These whites define blacks as the antithesis of American civilization. Magnificently gifted in music and dance, full of animal instincts (including an extraordinary sensuality), carefree, thoughtless, dreamers, poets, given to religious feeling, undisciplined, childish – that’s the conventional image of blacks that these whites readily construct. And they are ‘drawn to’ blacks because they have projected onto them what they would like to be but are not. Those who feel the greatest fascination are people who feel most deeply deficient themselves. (Wright qtd. in Beauvoir 353)

As can be seen in these two quotes, African Americans constitute the Other for white US-Americans and enable them to identify as Self in two different manners. On the one hand, as illustrated by the first quote, the denigrated Other can be looked down upon and is used as a negative foil revealing positive aspects of the Self. On the other hand, the idealized Other can be the object of fantasies and serve as a screen onto which dreams and desires are projected. Such idealization might develop out of a feeling of alienation from one's own society or a personal feeling of inadequacy.

The self-validating function of the Other for the Self is investigated by Said, who argues that for Europe "[t]he Orient is [...] one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other" whose perception is "governed [...] by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections" (1, 8). According to Said, Western conception of the 'Orient' has traditionally been ambiguous and "vacillates between the West's contempt for what is familiar and its shivers of delight" (59). He specifies this ambiguity of denigration and idealization in the following words:

The Orient was overvalued for its pantheism, its spirituality, its stability, its longevity, its primitivity, and so forth [...] Yet, almost without exception such overesteem was followed by a counterresponse: the Orient suddenly appeared lamentably underhumanized, antidemocratic, backward, barbaric and so forth. A swing of the pendulum in one direction caused an equal and opposite swing back: the Orient was undervalued. (Said 150)

Such ambiguous perceptions are not limited to the Orient but occur with regard to most Others and are closely paralleled by Western images of indigenous peoples as will be discussed in more detail in chapter four. In the film analysis in chapter five I will consider forms of idealization and demonization of the indigenous Other and examine reasons that might account for these types of representations.

Regardless of whether the Other is characterized as positive or negative, as has been the case for the Orient and indigenous peoples, the Other is still constructed by the Self and in order to serve the needs of the Self (Holliday 55). Even though the Other may be idealized, which can appear positive at a superficial level, at a deeper level the Other remains entrapped in an unequal power-relationship where he/she is the object that is stripped of complexities and defined by the Self (Pickering 73). Commenting on its ideological function, Pickering argues that "Otherness exists to subjugate its objects and assign them to their 'natural' place at the behest of those who thereby reconstitute themselves as subjects (71). Construction of alterity in this way not only serves the

process of identification of the Self but also to justify asymmetrical relationships and has real-life consequences in the struggle for hegemony (Pickering 73).

2.5 Indigeneity

As this thesis is concerned with the representation of indigenous peoples, a thorough understanding of the meaning of “indigenous” is essential. “Indigenous” indicates that a population lives in a certain place prior to the arrival of another people. Indigenous peoples, often referred to as native peoples, first nations, or aboriginal peoples, live everywhere on the globe ranging from the Ainu in Japan to the Sami in Scandinavia (Coates 55, 61). Due to the immense diversity of indigenous peoples, one of the most problematic aspects regarding the concept of indigeneity is the question of definition. While there is an overwhelming consensus about the indigeneity of some populations, such as Native Americans and Maori, the question whether many other groups can be designated as indigenous is sometimes heavily disputed (Coates 1). A widely circulated definition accepted by the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities states:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing in those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal systems. (UN Doc. E/CN.4/Sub.2/1986/7/Add.4 para. 379.qtd. in Sanders 6)

The historical continuity, referred to in this definition, can be based on living on (parts of) ancestral territory, descent from initial inhabitants of the territory, language use, and maintenance of culture. Culture in this sense may encompass aspects such as clothing, tribal systems, systems of beliefs, and ways of life (Sanders 6). As can be noted, this definition restricts indigeneity to pre-colonial societies who experienced colonialism and are still marginalized. Consequently, many groups are excluded if the U.N. definition is applied. It remains doubtful whether now sovereign island nations of the South Pacific can be considered indigenous, since they might not be ruled directly by a colonizing power anymore. However, one might argue that numerous sovereign states of Polynesia remain in a neo-colonial relationship, as they can be considered as

economically, politically and culturally dependent on previous colonizing nations (Coates 3; Craig 33).

Other definitions, from organizations such as the International Labor Organization and the World Bank are broader, emphasizing self-identification as a relevant criterion for indigeneity (Verdesio 556; Sanders 7). The definition of the World Bank, for instance, embraces vulnerability as an essential attribute of indigenous peoples (Sanders 7). This position is also supported by the renowned legal scholar Kingsbury, who includes the requirement of “historical experience of, or contingent vulnerability to, severe disruption, dislocation or exploitation” in the definition of indigenous peoples (453).

The native peoples depicted in *Pocahontas* and *Moana*, Native Americans and Polynesians, can be subsumed as indigenous, since both fulfill the criteria of the extensive definitions of indigeneity and may even satisfy the narrow criteria of the U.N. In the case of Native Americans classification as indigenous is relatively simple: Native Americans fit the criteria of the U.N. definition, as they are descendants of pre-colonial societies, have experienced colonization, marginalization and even dislocation, tend to exhibit a strong relation to their land and frequently wish to maintain tribal identities. In contrast, the case of Polynesians depicted in *Moana* is more complex. Polynesia encompasses a vast cultural and geographical region in the Pacific which forms a triangle between Hawaii, New Zealand, and Easter Island. The multitude of islands have very diverse histories of contact with the various colonial powers, which is also reflected in their contemporary political relations to them (Craig 28). Numerous Polynesian peoples would qualify for the narrow definition of indigeneity of the U.N., since they are still under the control of foreign nations and partly marginalized. Among others, these include native Hawaiians and the Māori of New Zealand (Craig 34-35). Other Polynesians, however, such as the populations of the Independent State of Samoa or the Kingdom of Tonga, would not fit the U.N. definition of indigeneity, since the native inhabitants constitute the dominant sector of the population and live in sovereign nations. However, almost all Polynesians, for instance also the native inhabitants of the Independent State of Samoa, would be included in Kingsbury’s more extensive definition of indigenous peoples, since they were in a colonial relationship in the past and, hence, meet the criterion of being subject to historical experiences of exploitation (Craig 31). Furthermore, most Polynesian communities can be described as vulnerable and would also identify themselves as indigenous.

In this section, I have reviewed the meaning of “indigeneity” and have established that Native Americans and Polynesian, the ethnicities represented in *Pocahontas* and *Moana*, can be regarded as indigenous. So far, I have discussed the concepts of stereotyping, ethnotyping and othering, which will serve to critically analyze representations of the indigenous Other in *Moana* and *Pocahontas*. In the next chapter, I will outline the methods used for analyzing these filmic representations and consider how filmic devices can be employed to create meaning.

3 Methods

In the previous chapter I have outlined the theoretical concepts which form the basis of this thesis and I have also presented the methodological steps that Leerssen proposes for the analysis of ethnotypes. To a large extent, I will adopt Leerssen's methodology when analyzing how the indigenous Other is represented in *Pocahontas* and *Moana* by focusing on the intertext of the films in chapter four and incorporating a textual analysis in chapter five (*Method* 28). I will not devote an individual chapter to the contextual analysis, however, due to the limited scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the context of the movie will be incorporated in parts of the textual analysis when needed. The textual analysis is based on Faulstich's film analysis model and on compositional analysis, both of which I will present subsequently.

3.1 Film Analysis Model of Faulstich

Faulstich suggests four constitutive steps for the analysis of films. In the first step, the question 'what happens?' is in the foreground. Hence, I will analyze the plot of the movie and present the structures of the films (Faulstich 26-27). Secondly, the character analysis aims at analyzing the different characters and their relations to each other. Characters occupy a special role in films, since they propel the plot through their actions (Mikos 163). Often, spectators are invited to occupy the subject position of a character, typically the protagonist, and by identifying with a certain character experience the plot from his or her perspective, which makes this part of the analysis important (Faulstich 97-98). Thirdly, I will examine the question of how characters and events are presented through the analysis of the use of film techniques and representational strategies (Faulstich 115). For this, I will apply rely on the approach of compositional analysis, which I will describe in more detail in the ensuing section. In the fourth and last part, the question of why the film represents characters and events the way it does is central.

According to Faulstich, the aim of this final phase is to analyze the norms and values of the film and to uncover the ideology of the film (27). I will deviate from Faulstich's model in this fourth phase, since the analysis of norms, values and ideology appears to be too general and I would diverge from my research question. Instead, I will focus

on the filmic display of indigeneity and examine why indigenous peoples are represented in specific ways in *Moana* and *Pocahontas*. Therefore, I will analyze the functions of the forms of indigenous representation and rely on the concepts of othering, stereotyping and ethnotyping in the process. My study of forms and functions of indigenous representation will build on the preceding analysis of the plot, the representation of characters and on the compositional analysis. To examine forms and functions in depth, I will also relate them to previous Western discourses on indigeneity which I will discuss in my intertextual analysis in chapter four.

3.2 Compositional Analysis

For the third step of Faulstich's model, the close analysis of filming devices, I will rely on the methodological repertoire of the compositional analysis. Compositional analysis helps to focus on the configuration of a film sequence and can be used for analyzing individual components, most prominently colors, framing, shot distance, camera angles and sound (Rose 83).

Colors constitute important component parts of any movie scene, as they can emphasize certain aspects of a scene and influence the spectators' perception and emotions (Rose 65). Colors express symbolic meanings, which vary, however, depending on the cultural context. Since I am concerned with the analysis of Disney movies, which are produced in America, I will rely on the symbolic meaning of colors as traditionally perceived by Westerners. White, for instance, tends to be associated with purity, innocence and peacefulness in numerous Western cultures (Faulstich 150). To give an example, all Native Americans in *Pocahontas* wear white clothes which, in my opinion, reinforces the impression of a harmonious society. I will elaborate on the symbolic meaning of the individual colors, as they occur in the respective sequences. According to Berg, the choice between light and dark colors plays a crucial role in stereotypical representations in movies (50). He argues that light colors are not only connoted with positive values but that light colors, particularly white, attract the attention of the eye. In contrast, dark colors, especially black, tend to be associated with negative values in Western filming traditions and do not draw as much attention as light colors. Traditionally, light colors tend to be reserved for the hero, while darker colors are typical of the representation of antagonists (Berg 50). *Pocahontas* adheres

to these principles as the villain, Rattcliffe, is depicted with dark colors, whereas the heroin, Pocahontas, wears clothes of light colors and is of lighter complexion than her fellow tribespeople.

The spatial organization of film is called *mis-en-scène*, which can be translated as “put[ting] into the scene” (Villarejo 28). *Mis-en-scène* concerns the “decisions about what to shoot and how to shoot it” (Rose 73). Three aspects of *mis-en-scène* that I will consider in my analysis are framing, shot distance and camera angle. Firstly, with regard to the screen frame, the choice between open and closed frames conveys meaning. The open frame refers to the area outside of the image contained by the frame. The use of an open frame implies that somebody or something important might be situated outside the visual field of the character or spectator. Hence, an open frame serves to create tension and frequently occurs in horror movies or thrillers (Rose 74). In contrast, the closed frame does not allude to the space outside the frame and the image of the frame can be regarded as self-reliant (Monaco 185). It is also important to consider the spatial organization of a frame and to analyze how elements are related to or separated from each other, for instance through lines, degree of proximity or similar or contrastive colors (Rose 66). Additionally, the location of characters in the frame is significant. According to Berg, the protagonist typically occupies the central, upper third of the frame, while side characters, usually types, are placed at the periphery. Thus, the importance of characters can frequently already be deduced by considering which space they occupy in the frame (Berg 43).

Secondly, shot distance is a further crucial aspect of *mis-en-scène* and concerns the distance from which a character is filmed. The following categories for various shot distances are commonly used: The close shot reveals the head and the upper body of a figure. The medium shot depicts a character from the upper thighs to the head. The full shot shows a character completely from head to toe. The medium long shot does not only reveal a person but also part of the surrounding environment, such as the person and a part of the room that the person is situated in. The entire room with all its characters is shown through the long shot. Finally, extreme long shots are used to show extensive landscapes with human figures appearing barely distinguishable (Faulstich 117-19). According to Monaco, certain shot distances convey certain moods (197). A high number of closeup shots can have a disconcerting effect, since the spectator lacks information about the rest of the setting. The use of many long shots,

on the other hand, foregrounds the context instead of the drama or personality and can produce feelings of alienation. Kress and van Leeuwen observe that shot distances influence the relations that spectators feel they have with characters on the screen (126). If long shots are used, facial expressions of characters can hardly be distinguished and, thus, spectators tend to experience less empathy and less personal connection. In contrast, close shots tend to reveal the emotions of characters much more and, hence, enable spectators to feel more sympathy and a stronger sense of connection towards characters. According to Berg, a high number of close shots and a longer duration of these shots indicate the importance of a character and consequently lead spectators to identify more strongly with characters depicted in such a manner (48). Although numerous film critiques agree on these prevalent effects of the different shot-types, Rose warns from an overgeneralized analytical use of such findings and emphasizes that the context and distinctiveness of each individual scene should be considered in film analysis (75).

Thirdly, Camera angles constitute another important filming device used to convey meaning. According to Kress and van Leeuwen, camera angles represent the perspective of the spectators towards the characters and consequently tend to shape their relations in the following way (140): Low-angle shots attribute characters with importance, dominance and control, sometimes to the extent of making them appear threatening. High-angle shots look down at characters and show their vulnerability and insignificance (Berg 46; Monaco 198-199; Faulstich 121-123). Eventually, eye-level shots signify that there is an equality of power between interactive and represented participants (Kress and van Leeuwen 140).

Besides the visual level, a further critical component part of films is sound (Rose 78). Sound fulfills important functions in film and can have a tremendous impact on spectators' reception since manipulations of sound tend to be less easily noticeable than manipulations of the visual material. Thus, aural input can affect spectators more subconsciously. (Faulstich 141). Music, for instance, can be used for underscoring, which means that it supports the portrayal of a certain character or place. In some films, such as *Once Upon a Time in the West*, the appearance of a character is always accompanied by the character's special musical motive (Faulstich 142). Another main function of music in film is to reinforce the atmosphere of a scene, as for instance when images of a military attack are accompanied by the sound of drums and trumpets or

violin music plays to a romantic scene (Faulstich 142). Other partly overlapping functions of music are to illustrate and emphasize emotions, to link different places, and to convey social, cultural and historical contexts, as for instance in *Moana* and *Pocahontas*, where indigenous music highlights aboriginal spaces (Faulstich 142-144).

In this chapter, I have presented the methodological steps that I will take and have considered how filmic devices, such as colors, framing, shot distance, camera angles and sound can be used to influence the spectators. This knowledge about the effects of filmic devices, will help to understand how *Moana* and *Pocahontas* convey indigenous Otherness. Before analyzing both movies in detail, I will provide an overview of previous Western representations of indigeneity in the next chapter.

4 Intertextual Analysis

With this chapter I aim to trace the historic development of ethnotypical representations of indigenous peoples in Western discourse. I will limit the analysis to ethnotypes of Native Americans and Polynesians, as these two indigenous groups are represented in *Pocahontas* and *Moana*. Understanding Western traditions of representing these collectives will help to locate the Disney representations and facilitate determining which recurrent images are employed in *Mona* and *Pocahontas* and where the movies deviate from previous representations.

4.1 The Representation of Native Americans in Western Discourses

Berkhofer summarizes representations of Native Americans with the following words:

For most Whites throughout the last five centuries, the Indian of imagination and ideology has been as real, perhaps more real, than the Native American of actual existence and contact. As preconception became conception and conception became fact, the Indian was used for the end of argument, art, and entertainment by White painters, philosophers, poets, novelists, and movie makers among many. (71)

For this intertextual analysis, I will adopt Berkhofer's distinction between 'Indians' as Western inventions, images and ethnotypical constructs and Native Americans, as the indigenous people inhabiting America (1). Although Native Americans are estimated to encompass over 400 different nations with a multitude of languages, live in different climates from the Alaskan tundra to the New Mexican desert, and lead different lifestyles ranging from nomadic ways of life to sophisticated agricultural cultivation, Western representations tend to disregard this enormous diversity (Churchill 198). Instead, most Westerners associate Native Americans with a few tribes of the northeast, the Iroquois and the Hurons for instance, and the tribes of the plains, most notably the Sioux (Buscombe 25). When representing Native American in movies, filmmakers have frequently tended to confuse tribal clothing, language and religion and, at times, even invented them. In this way, they constructed an 'Indian' Other corresponding to their own fantasies and projections (O'Connor 33). Below, I will review how images of the 'Indian' Other originated, changed and stagnated.

4.1.1.1 The Representation of Native Americans in Colonial America

When encountering American aboriginals in 1492, Europeans tried to make sense of the unfamiliar by resorting to familiar categories, such as ideas of a Golden Age and 'noble primitivism' dating back to antiquity (Ellingson 12). The myth of the Golden Age, which originated in ancient Greece, referred to a period in which humans were thought to have lived in an innocent and natural state, an idea which also appears in biblical images of the Garden of Eden (Krech 17; Leerssen, *Primitivism* 406). Similarly, 'noble primitivism' can be traced back to antique ethnographic reports about remote populations that were constructed as 'primitive' in juxtaposition to the authors' own supposedly corrupted civilizations. Herodotus, for instance, described the Scythians as living an austere life close to nature, thereby constructing them as the Greek's Other (Krech 18). Similarly, Tacitus wrote about the Germans, which he characterized as primitive, simple, frugal and warlike people, in contrast to a supposedly overly complex and decadent Roman society (Leerssen, *Primitivism* 407).

In the age of discovery, Europeans perceived the 'New World', based on these antique preconceptions, as an earthly paradise and Native Americans as its 'noble' inhabitants. Westerners regarded 'Indians' as living in a primordial state and imagined their life with a sense of nostalgic longing for an idealized past (Ellingson 82). Columbus' description of the indigenous Arawak as "so guileless and so generous with all they possess" and his emphasis on their harmonious communal life and their innocence must be understood in this context (qtd. in Berkhofer 6). Another explorer, Captain Barlowe, characterized the aboriginal population of Virginia similarly as "most gentle, loving, and faithful, void of all guile, and treason, and such as lived after the manner of the golden age." (qtd. in Krech 18). As can be seen, Native Americans were already described as 'noble savages' in travelogues recounting the first encounters. The idea of the 'noble Indian Other' was developed further in subsequent centuries. It was also frequently used as a model for alternatives to criticize European societies. In the 16th century, Michel de Montaigne, for instance, praised the Tupinamba's natural lifestyle in order to condemn corruption, greed and social disparity in France, using the 'New World' "as a stick for beating the Old" (Brandon 86). This tradition was continued by philosophers of the Enlightenment who heavily relied on the contrast between nature, which was viewed positively, and culture, which was perceived as artificial and bad (Berkhofer 76). Accordingly, indigenous people were thought to be close to nature and to be free

of the restraints, corruption and artificiality of civilization. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's characterization of 'Indians' as "simple, communal, happy, free, equal and pure" must be interpreted as a critique of modern society, regarding diverse aspects such as politics, religion, economy and education (Krech 18). As the "Noble Savage was used as a polemical device to criticize European institutions" and was constructed as a model for a possible reform of Western society, the image came under attack from the institutions criticized, which often responded by emphasizing the 'degenerated, primitive' character of 'Indians' thereby proliferating the idea of the 'ignoble savage' (Berkhofer 77-78).

While the idealization of the 'noble savage' serves to contrast negative aspects of the Self with positive aspects of the Other, the 'ignoble savage' functions in exactly the opposite way by elevating and defining the Western Self through degradation of the 'Indian' Other. The trope of the 'ignoble savage', like that of the 'noble savage', originated during Columbus' travels, as exemplified by his description of the Caribs as aggressive and hostile people who are "very fierce and eat human flesh" (qtd. in Berkhofer 7). In the famous dispute of Valladolid from 1550 to 1551 over the question whether indigenous people should be treated more humanly by the Spanish colonizers, Sepúlveda compared them to animals and described them as sinful and barbarous cannibals (Berkhofer 11-12). Indigenous people were thus perceived as inferior 'heathens' in contrast to 'superior' Christian Europeans, which served to legitimize their exploitation, subjugation and genocide. Parallels to Sepúlveda's representation can be found in Puritan discourses of the 16th century. The 'Indian' constituted a divine metaphor for the Puritans who perceived conflicts with Native Americans as external manifestations of internal struggle against sin (Berkhofer 81). In this sense, Berkhofer asserts that "the Puritans' image of the Indian was the projection of the fears and repressed desires in themselves upon the outsiders they encountered in America, and so the extermination of Native Americans was part of the Puritan cleansing of sin from themselves" (83). The 'sinful and bestial' character of the 'ignoble savages', frequently referred to as 'scourge of the devil', featured prominently in the genre of the captivity narrative. Captivity narratives, which were popular in New England in the 17th and 18th century, related the ordeals that Puritans had to endure when abducted by Native Americans (Berkhofer 84-85). In this literary genre as well as in other discourses of colonial America the image of the 'Indian' as dangerous and deviant Other helped Puritans to consolidate a strong Christian identity by establishing symbolic boundaries.

They could feel superior with regard to their own religion and culture by contrasting themselves with 'sinful, savage' Others. Hence, the 'ignoble savage' had a self-validating function for the Puritans. Aside from contributing to the creation and maintenance of a Puritan identity the degradation of Native Americans as 'subhuman' served as a justification for their mistreatment and as rationale for European dominance (Berkhofer 83).

4.1.1.2 The Representation of Native Americans in Romantic American literature

In the 19th century, after the War of Independence, the ethnotype of the 'Indian' was further shaped by the development of national literature in the USA. Under the influence of Romanticism, many American writers adopted the theme of 'noble and ignoble savagery' (Berkhofer 87). Since Native Americans were no longer perceived as dangerous by most inhabitants of the US, they could be portrayed positively and served for all types of Romantic projections such as fear and nostalgia (Ludwig 84). James Fenimore Cooper, one of the most influential writers of the period, never had direct contact with Native Americans but depicted them as both 'noble and ignoble' (Churchill 7):

Few men exhibit [...] greater antithesis of character, than the native warrior of North America. In war, he is daring, boastful, cunning, ruthless, self-denying, and self-devoted; in peace, just, generous, hospitable, revengeful [sic], superstitious, modest, and commonly chaste. (Cooper 5)

In Romantic American literature of the first half of the 19th century, one overarching theme was the demise of indigenous people. In Cooper's *Last of the Mohicans* and in many other works of that period the image of the 'vanishing Indian' is central (Neale 9). The 'vanishing Indian' also features in Stone's popular play *Metamora, Or the Last of the Wampanoags* (1829) (Ludwig 84). In this drama the 'Indian' hero, Metamora, unsuccessfully attempts to resist the encroachment of British settlers. The play invites Americans, who with great likelihood were reminded of the relatively recent American War of Independence, to identify with the 'Indians' in the struggle against the 'unscrupulous' British (Jones 17). According to Jones, the play established numerous patterns for the representation of Native Americans (18-21). The white actor Forrest, who impersonated Metamora, spoke with many guttural sounds and grunts and at a slow pace and showed only repressed emotions (Jones 18-19). Alongside this stoic attitude, Metamora was represented as 'noble', namely brave, fair, patriotic, honest

and spiritual, but also as 'ignoble' when depicted as superstitious, fierce, menacing, spiteful, bloodthirsty and violently whirling the tomahawk (Jones 17, 21).

Although US high culture began to disregard the 'Indian' theme by the middle of the 19th century, Romantic plays and novels had decisively shaped the 'Indian' ethnotype, which was enthusiastically embraced and perpetuated by American popular culture subsequently.

4.1.1.3 The Representation of Native Americans in Popular Culture

In the second half of the 19th century, Native Americans of the prairie increasingly appeared in popular culture, especially in dime novels and Wild West shows, and from the turn of the 20th century onwards also in newly emerging Western movies (Berkhofer 97). Remarking on the longevity and permanence of Western ideas of 'Indians', Berkhofer observes:

No matter how new the media were, the old White stereotypes of the Indian generally prevailed in their presentations. Vicious and noble savages peopled the movie and television scenes just as they had the cheap and elite literature of the past. (103)

In numerous Westerns of the past but also of today, 'Indians' are stereotyped as skilled at surviving in nature. 'Indians' are usually flat characters occupying marginal roles, either as helpers of white heroes or as outlaws threatening the social order and progress. When supporting white protagonists in their effort to advance civilization, 'Indians' typically are represented as 'noble'; when depicted as outlaws they appear as vengeful and bloodthirsty (Berkhofer 98). 'Indian' stock characters include that of the warrior, medicine man, chief, loyal sidekick, squaw and princess (O'Connor 32; Green 711). Normally, squaws are no match for white heroes, as they are represented as debased and mistreated by the men of their community which constructs Native Americans as primitive and misogynistic. Princesses of noble birth, on the other hand, typically fall in love with the white protagonist, are eager to assimilate, help in the advance of white 'civilization' and oftentimes perish tragically, which conveniently helps to circumnavigate the uncomfortable issue of miscegenation (Francis 121-122; Green 703-704). Also, *Pocahontas* makes use of stock characters, such as the chief, warrior, medicine man and princess. As typical in Westerns, the 'Indian' princess Pocahontas immediately falls in love with the European John Smith and helps to establish an

English colony by preventing war. *Pocahontas* deviates from classical Westerns, however, as it is not Pocahontas who assimilates but rather John, who adopts 'Indian' ways of life.

Visually, 'Indians' are frequently depicted with traditional clothes and items, such as feathers, moccasins, pipes, headdress, buckskin, braided hair and beadwork in photographs and films (Mihesuah 79; Geller 66). In this way, they tend to be constructed as "relics of the past" and as incompatible with modernity. Representations of this sort appear to convey the message that Native Americans are frozen in history at the point of extinction and incapable of adapting to changes brought by the Europeans (Berkhofer 28; Francis 58). At the beginning of the 20th century, the conception of Native Americans as frozen in time was so strong that photographers visiting reservations to take the last photographs of supposedly disappearing people brought their own requisites to make already assimilated Native Americans appear more authentic to Western audiences. The famous photographer Edward Curtis, for instance, used masks and costumes and covered the short hair of Native Americans with wigs to convey 'Indian' authenticity (Griffiths 88). The case of Edward Curtis demonstrates that discourses about Native Americans usually do not aim to represent the circumstances of their lives but oftentimes rather foreground and exaggerate cultural differences to satisfy Western fantasies about 'Indian' Otherness (Coward 5). In general, Native Americans tend to be represented as primitive 'savages', which is frequently signified through nakedness (Francis 85). Lack of clothes not only turns 'Indians' into erotic and exotic objects but also serves to underline their 'primitive' nature in contrast to supposedly 'superior' whites (Lent 217).

The 'vanishing Indian', so omnipresent in American popular culture of the 19th century, must be interpreted against the background of the prominence of Social Darwinism and American manifest destiny (Huhndorf 57-58). In the second half of the 19th century, many Europeans and Americans believed in a competition of human 'races' and in this context Native Americans were placed far below Europeans in the imagined 'racial' hierarchy (German 195; Berkhofer 53-54). The attribution of negative aspects such as practices of torture, revengeful attacks on 'innocent' settlers and rape of white women served to emphasize the inferiority of dangerous 'savages' (Churchill 191). Consequently, the tropes of the 'ignoble- and the vanishing Indian' explained to

Western audiences why Native Americans needed to disappear in the wake of the expansion of supposedly 'superior' Western societies.

The 1950s and 1960s saw a proliferation of Westerns on television with as many as twenty-eight Westerns being aired per week (Taylor 230). The majority of these Westerns continued to perpetuate old ethnotypes. In Westerns, Buscombe argues, "[t]he view of the Indians that was laid down at the time the genre was formed is still embedded deep within its structure" (30). Buscombe explains the longevity of 'Indian' ethnotypes in Westerns by stating that a genre tends to be readily consumed by the audience if it meets their expectations and does not deviate too much (30). Florack and Berg provide an additional explanation by claiming that stereotypes in film are very efficient on the narrative level since they activate the background knowledge of the audience, which facilitates the creation of narratives and consequently tends to reduce production costs (Florack *Character* 497; Berg 42).

Eventually, *Broken Arrow* (1950) transformed the genre of the Western. *Broken Arrow* was among the first films sympathizing with Native Americans and providing an inverted perspective and was emulated by numerous other films (Baird *Dances* 155). In sympathetic Westerns, the plight of the 'Indians' is shown and contrasted with the aggression of the oncoming settlers (Taylor 231). A recent example is *Dances with Wolves* (1990). It tells the story of a US Army lieutenant going native and joining the 'noble savages' in their struggle against the march of white civilization (Baird *Discovery* 205). Although films sympathetic to Native Americans invite the audience to take the aboriginal perspective, they are still entangled in old ethnotypical patterns of representation, adhering to the idea of 'noble and ignoble savagery' and depicting Native Americans in juxtaposition to civilization.

Regardless of genre and time, in Western discourses 'Indians' usually stand for concepts such as nature, savageness and community, which tend to be contrasted with culture, modernity and individualism (Lacroix 4). This dichotomy is typical of the representation of the Other in contrast with the Self (Crang 59). I will explain the dynamics behind this powerful dichotomy in more detail when outlining the functions of the 'Indian' Other in the shaping of an American identity in the next section.

4.1.1.4 The Functions of the Representation of Native Americans for the Creation of American Identity

When considering the enormous number of novels and films, the question arises why 'Indians' are so omnipresent in Western media (Buscombe 24). One possible reason is that, whether 'noble- or ignoble', 'Indian' ethnotypes seem to be inextricably linked to the American quest for identity. According to Pearce, "the Indian became important [...] not for what he was in and of himself, but rather for what he showed civilized men they were not and must not be" (5). Deloria expands on Pearce's idea by arguing that whites used 'Indians' not only as contrast but also for identification (21). Transformations of the American society and its self-conception are paralleled by oscillations of 'Indian' ethnotypes. During colonial times, the 'Indian' Other was perceived as the antithesis of white civilization and thereby helped settlers to demarcate their society and define their norms and values (Deloria 21). When Americans started to revolt against the British and distance themselves from Europe, they opted, at least at a symbolic level, for an 'Indian' identity as exemplified by revolutionaries who dressed up as 'Indians' during the Boston Tea Party. According to Deloria, "[the colonists] began to transform exterior, noble savage Others into symbolic figures that could be rhetorically interior to the society they sought to inaugurate. [...] As England became a them for colonists, Indians became an us" (22).

Similarly, in later periods, as exemplified by the Boy Scouts and countercultural movements, Americans turned to 'Indians' as positive points of reference (Deloria 156; Huhndorf 14). American society experienced drastic social changes in the wake of modernization, including industrialization, increased competition in the marketplace and urbanization. These transformations contributed to feelings of anxiety, alienation and crises of identity. In quest of a 'true' American identity some resorted to the 'noble savage' and to what they imagined as 'Indian' lifestyle (Huhndorf 14). Fearing that boys would lose touch with nature and become effeminate in urban surroundings, Seton, who was one of the founders of the Boy Scouts of America and influenced millions through his publications, strove to educate youths in 'Indian' ways of life (Krech 19-20). In *The Gospel of the Red Man: An Indian Bible*, Seton wrote: "[T]he Red Man is the apostle of outdoor life, his example and precept are what young America needs today above any other ethical teaching of which I have knowledge" (2). According to Seton, immersion in supposedly 'Indian' activities such as hunting, fishing, woodcraft, scouting

and camping could help reconnect youths to nature and contribute to their character formation (Deloria 96).

Approximately fifty years later during the countercultural revolution, Hippies and New Age movements perceived the 'Indian' as "modernity's other" and identified with a supposedly 'Indian' lifestyle (Huhndorf 14). They attributed 'Indians' with features such as communal life, spirituality, and closeness to the environment and tried to incorporate these aspects into their social experiments while criticizing – much like the philosophers of the Enlightenment – the complexities of modern societies, inequality, individualism and materialism (Deloria 156-158). In the wake of the countercultural revolution, the image of the 'Ecological Indian', as a sub-ethnotype of the 'noble savage', gained momentum. The 'Indian' Other was believed to live in harmony with nature, to treat animals and plants with sympathy and respect and to preserve the balance of the environment (Krech 21-22).

This positive conception of Native Americans as 'noble' conservationists and as models whose lifestyle should be emulated is reflected in films sympathetic towards 'Indians'. One frequent trope occurring in these movies is that of going native. This means that the white hero frequently undergoes a metamorphosis and adopts Native American ways of life, as happens in *Dances with Wolves* and in *Pocahontas*.

Baird explains the popularity of the going 'Indian' myth by resorting to three theories of Lévi-Strauss, Lewis and Freud. According to the first theory by Lévi-Strauss, myths help to resolve traumas and help to integrate cultural differences and conflicts symbolically. "With the going Indian myth, the conflict is between nature and industry; hunting and agrarianism; innocence and decadence; manifest destiny and the sacred homeland" (Baird *Discovery* 196). Secondly, Lewis describes the idea of an American hero "emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry and untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritance of family and race" (5). The protagonists of many of the sympathetic Westerns, and also John Smith in *Pocahontas*, can be described as such heroes that distance themselves from their colonial history and attempt to resolve the conflict between settlers and indigenous peoples (Baird *Discovery* 197). Thirdly, Baird uses Freud's theory of the *family romance* to account for the popularity of the going 'Indian' myth. According to Freud, some children create a family romance, which means that they imagine that they are the offspring of more dignified parents and negate their actual family. By engaging in such fantasies, children make up for a lack

of affection by their parents or cope with the fact that their parents are not infallible. Employing the concept of family romance for the analysis of the going native myth Braid argues:

Working on the personal and collective psychological levels, the romance of Native American parentage would satisfy the wish for a return to the Garden of Eden, where strong and noble parents live in an environment of abundance and harmony, free of the decay, pollution, and anxiety of industrial society. (*Discovery* 198)

Indulgence in the going 'Indian' myth, which according to Huhndorf is a form of escapism and nostalgia for primitivism, is closely connected to American self-doubts regarding the historical mistreatment of Native Americans (14). The USA in its current form would not exist without the annihilation of many Native Americans and their displacement from land claimed by settlers. In this context Berkhofer states:

What the captivity narrative started the Western novel and movie continued to finish long past the actual events of conquest – as if the American conscience still needed to be reassured about the rightness of past actions and the resulting present times. (104)

Thus, it appears that one way of interpreting negative and positive representations of Native Americans depends on the way in which the historic role of white settlers is perceived. 'Ignoble savages' of Puritan literature and Westerns contrast 'primitive Indians' with the merits and 'superiority' of Western civilization and serve as a rationale for white colonization and the status quo. Images of 'noble savages' and fantasies of going 'Indian', on the other hand, comprise a different strategy of coming to terms with history through the reversal of stereotypes toward an idealization of the indigenous Other. As I will show in chapter five, *Pocahontas* oscillates between both strategies when creating its own version of the American past. Francis summarizes this ambiguous character of representations regarding Native Americans with these words:

Some movies have dealt with this anxiety by dehumanizing Indians, turning them into savage monsters [...]. Other movies have romanticized Indians for their wisdom and natural virtue. Either way, the movies project onto Indian characters the uncertainty non-Natives feel about the justice of our history and our right to occupy the land. (107-108)

Both idealizing and degrading portrayals construct the Other for the Self. Whether 'noble- or ignoble', most representations of Native Americans remain stereotypical and as such they are dehumanizing, since they negate diversity within indigenous communities and deny commonalities between all humans (Krech 26). As I will

demonstrate in the next section, the same patterns and functions also apply to Western ethnotypes of Polynesians.

4.2 Representation of Polynesians in Western Discourses

The sun comes up in laughter, the work goes easily, food is for the taking and the sun sets on love and affection. There is no hunger, no loneliness, and no ambition. [...] They live in the warmth of communal love [...] free from the cult of the individual, unconcerned with egos, clapping hands around the *kava* bowl [...]. (Norton 15)

This tourist advertisement for the South Pacific was published in a Sydney newspaper in 1968. It contains numerous widespread Western stereotypes about life in the South Seas, stereotypes which almost fifty years later are still prevalent in *Moana*. The first European accounts of Tahiti from the 18th century painted a very similar picture of the native population. It is the persistence of this Western tradition of representing Oceania and especially Polynesia that I will trace in this section. In addition to positive representations I will also examine negative depictions and analyze their functions for the West as well as reasons for fluctuations in Western images of Oceania.

4.2.1 Representation of Polynesians in the 18th Century

In 1768, Louis Antoine de Bougainville landed on the Polynesian island of Tahiti and his reports of his first encounter with the indigenous population had a tremendous impact as they decisively shaped European perception of the area (Kohl 143). Western imagination, however, was not only influenced by the accounts of navigators but was also determined by already existing ideas about a Golden Age as well as previous experiences with Native Americans (Keown 31). Bougainville's description of Tahiti and its indigenous population continued the previously mentioned tradition of the 'noble savage' (Kohl 143):

I thought I was transported into the garden of Eden. [...] We found companies of men and women sitting under the shade of their fruit-trees [...] everywhere we found hospitality, ease, innocent joy, and every appearance of happiness amongst them. (Bougainville qtd. in B. Smith 81)

Bougainville described Tahiti as blessed with the best climate of the world and praised the lush, tropical vegetation and the abundance of fruit that could just be plucked from the trees (Kohl 143). He connected the paradisiacal environment to the natives, which

he portrayed as beautiful, healthy, amicable, sensual and close to nature (Edmond 9). Due to the natural abundance of food, the inhabitants, as described by Bougainville, did not have to work much and could dedicate much of their time to enjoying simple pleasures such as dance, music, conversation and making love which – as Bougainville emphasized – frequently occurred in public. Tahiti's society, according to Bougainville, was the happiest on the globe characterized by harmonious coexistence and lack of poverty and crime attributed to the society's egalitarian structure (Kohl 149).

By the time of Tahiti's 'discovery', the idea of the 'noble savage' was already prominent in Europe due to the Romantic philosophical writings of Rousseau. The European public imagined Tahiti as a utopian, prelapsarian paradise (Keown 19). When using 'utopian' in this thesis, I understand it as "relating to or aiming for a perfect society in which everyone works well with each other and is happy" ("Utopian"). In this sense, representations of Tahiti and Polynesia served as an exotic counterexample for criticizing the ills of European civilization and express sentiments of alienation from modern society (Dürbeck 344-345). A great example of the enthusiastic European reception of tales about Polynesia is the *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville* (1796), in which Diderot uses Tahiti as a contrast for criticizing European restrictive sexual morals and colonial aggression (Kohl 159-160). Kohl attributes the strong resonance of idealized reports of the untainted Polynesian paradise and the revival of the idea of the 'noble savage' in France to an increased pessimism in large segments of French society, which resulted in escapist fantasies (154).

4.2.2 Representation of Polynesians in the 19th Century

Polynesia was mainly represented as an earthly paradise populated by 'noble savages' in discourses of the late 18th century, although contrasting representations of 'ignoble savagery' also existed since the first encounters (Keown 20). However, representations of the natives as 'ignoble' increased at the turn of the 19th century and prevailed throughout most of the 19th century. The rise of negative portrayals is related to increased hostile contact in the wake of European imperial expansion (Howe 15). Oceanic populations often resisted Western traders and explorers which was reflected in their accounts of 'ignoble savagery' (Keown 20). Also, Missionaries aiming at converting natives highlighted the 'savage' character of indigenous peoples in order to emphasize the necessity of their enterprise (Edmond 9). Missionaries such as William

Ellis and John William described natives as lazy, obsessed with amusement and emphasized their 'savage' character by citing practices such as tattooing, cannibalism and the killing of babies (Keown 36).

European imperialism gained momentum in the 19th century and this development was accompanied by the rise of Social Darwinism and changing self-conceptions (Howe 15). As Europeans regarded themselves as biologically, morally and socially superior, the inferiority of the indigenous Other was foregrounded. Europeans differentiated between various levels of 'racial inferiority' of Oceanic peoples (Geiger 55). Polynesians were light-skinned and, thus, regarded as more hospitable, more civilized and superior to the other populations of the South Pacific. The darker-skinned Melanesians, in contrast, were placed at the lower rung of the 'racial hierarchy' and regarded as belligerent, barbarous and savage (Keown 18). This differentiation between 'noble' Polynesians and 'ignoble' Melanesians, based on racist theories, is illustrated in Beatrice Grimshaw's description:

East of Fiji [Polynesia] is one long lotus-eating dream, stirred only by occasional parties of pleasure, feasting, love-making, dancing, and a [sic] very little cultivating work. Music is the soul of the people, beauty of face and movement is more the rule than the exception, and friendliness to strangers is carried almost to excess. Westward of the Fijis [Melanesia] [...] life is more like a nightmare than a dream, murder stalks openly in broad daylight, [and] the people are nearer to monkeys than to human beings. (7)

In this extract, influences of travel reports of the 15th and early 16th century and Rousseau's 'noble savage' resurface in the description of the Polynesians. In contrast, the description of the 'barbarous' Melanesians, appears to follow the tradition of missionary writing and, especially in the case of the comparison of indigenous people to monkeys, the influence of Social Darwinism can be noted. Imperialist and missionary discourses on Oceania sought to justify European expansion by emphasizing the inferiority of indigenous people. Traces of these degrading descriptions can also be found in the adventure-novels of the 19th century (Dürbeck 56; Howe 15). Robert Michael Ballantyne's *The Coral Island* became the most prominent novel of this kind and the following description of the natives by the narrator serves to illustrate its imperial ideology:

The canoe struck, and with a yell that seemed to issue from the throats of incarnate fiends, they leaped into the water, and drove their enemies up the beach. [...] Most of the men wielded clubs of enormous size and curious shapes [and] [...] looked more like demons than human beings. [The chief] was tattooed from head to foot, and his face, besides being tattooed, was besmeared with

red paint, and streaked with white. [...] Scarcely had [the warriors] limbs ceased to quiver when the monsters cut slices of flesh from his body, and, after roasting them slightly over the fire, devoured them. (Ballantyne 138-140)

The portrayal of the natives' savageness in this scene and in other parts of *The Coral Island* carries the message that Western intervention is needed to civilize indigenous peoples.

I agree with Dutheil, who argues that “[t]he function of the cannibal is to nurture the belief in the British racial, cultural and moral superiority” (106). As, I will show in my analysis of *Moana*, which, in the depiction of the Kakamora, features club-wielding ‘savages’ similar to the above-mentioned excerpt, images of ‘ignoble’ natives still persist in Western representations of Oceania. Description of cannibalistic practices can be observed in many other novels such as Jack London’s *South Sea Tales* as well as in Herman Melville’s *Typee*. Melville, however, also presents the South Seas in utopian terms and peoples it with ‘noble savages’ (Keown 32). Thus, *Typee* can be positioned in the “Enlightenment and Romantic tradition which imaginatively appropriates the South Pacific in order to construct its case against the ignorability of civilization” (Edmond 84).

Melville appears to be no exception in his contrastive depiction of the South Sea. Most novels about the region tend to be ambiguous and are populated with ‘noble- and ignoble savages’. Rennie remarks that “the ignoble savage did not simply displace the noble savage” (182). This position accords with Dürbeck, who also argues that throughout the history of Western discourses on Polynesia both ethnotypes continuously existed next to each other (56). Depending on the intellectual climate in Europe representations of indigenous people vacillated between the negative and the positive. For criticizing Western society, the image of the ‘noble savage’ was procured; justification of imperial ambitions, in contrast, required the use of the ‘ignoble savage’. In this sense, Keown argues that “the ‘noble savage’, like ‘the Oriental’, became Europe’s binary opposite, an ideological construct against which Europe could define and assert itself” (31). Heightened Western confidence regarding the progress and the modernity of ‘civilization’ is reflected in the representation of the South Sea populations as antithesis to modernity, as backward ‘Stone-Age cultures’ (Lyons 43). This mirror-image of Oceanians as supposedly stagnant and intellectually dormant is illustrated by David H. Lawrence’s question: “The Maoris, the Tongans, the Marquesans, the Fijians, the Polynesians: holy God, how long have they been turning over in the same sleep,

with varying dreams?” (133). The binary pair of modernity/backwardness is merely one example. In the analysis of Melville’s *Typee*, Stern offers a number of additional oppositional patterns that illustrate how Polynesia tends to be related to the West when represented (Lyons 44). These binary pairs of the West/Polynesia include “conquest/submission, ultimate doom; quest, mobility/seclusion, immobility; consciousness/unconsciousness; attempt to conquer natural environment/integration with natural environment; artificiality, complexity/naturalness, simplicity” (Stern qtd. in Lyons 44). These polar opposites seem to still be prevalent in many Western discourses on Polynesia and can also be detected in *Moana*’s portrayal of Polynesians as natural and immobile.

4.2.3 Representation of Polynesians from the 20th Century to the Present

It appears that positive depictions of Polynesia increased again at the beginning of the 20th century. Cultural anthropology, novels and the newly emerging medium of film contributed to the South Sea hype of the 1920s (Brawley and Dixon 17). Anthropologists who hurried to Oceania to study the supposedly vanishing indigenous peoples, described them as innocent, peaceful, hospitable and exotic (Howe 23).

One anthropologist, Maragrete Mead, was especially influential in raising Western interest in Polynesia. Mead’s *Coming Off Age in Samoa* (1928) presented Samoans as lacking artificial cultural restraints on sexuality. Mead argued that the freedom of youths to engage in pre-marital sex, helped to avoid problems of puberty typical for Western, industrialized countries, such as teenagers rebelling against their parents. Mead’s representation of Samoa as ‘land of free love’ echoed descriptions of ‘uncorrupted’ Polynesian societies so typical for Bougainville and Romantic writers (Keown 49).

Novels like *White Shadows in the South Seas*, which in 1920 became number five in the US non-fiction bestselling list, paralleled Romantic authors in their depiction of Oceania and helped to popularize the area (Geiger 80). When films located in the South Seas started to be released, a broad Western audience was finally able to experience the region visually. Hollywood promulgated traditional and stereotypical representations accumulated in the discourses of the previous two hundred years (Brawley and Dixon 175). The renewed popularity of the South Seas and its positive

representation in Western discourses in the early 20th century, according to Geiger, were grounded in doubts about Western civilization after the atrocities of the First World War, which contributed to the formation of escapist dreams (81). Furthermore, American fantasies about the natural beauty of a tropical South Sea paradise appeared to be rooted in the increasing awareness regarding the urbanization of the country. Resurging insecurities about the closing of the Western frontier in 1920 manifested themselves in nostalgic longing for Oceania (Geiger 83).

From the 20th century to the present, representations of Polynesia and its indigenous population have been predominantly benevolent. Hollywood movies, such as *Birds of Paradise* (1930), *Baywatch Hawaii* (1989-2001), *Once Were Warriors* (1994), and *Blue Crush* (2002) among numerous others, have continued to romantically depict Polynesians as stereotypical Others (Brislin 104; Keown 20). According to Brislin, media stereotypes about Pacific Islanders can be classified into four groups:

- Pleasant but basically ignorant natives in subsistence social structures. Even after Western contact they cling to their picturesque but primitive customs and mores.
- Savage cannibals who inevitably are overcome by superior Western power.
- Shapely, sexy, uninhibited women ever-willing to take a roll in the taro with a Westerner.
- Self-inflated men who preen and strut but are easily fooled by superior Western intelligence – often played comically. (Brislin 106)

As I will show in the film-analysis, with slight alterations most of these stereotypes also occur in *Moana*.

In the tourism industry, the long tradition of existing stereotypes is used strategically – sometimes by indigenous communities themselves – for advertising Polynesia as the ideal destination for vacations as this advertisement text demonstrates: “Come and share the timeless traditions of Polynesia where leisure is an art form and there’s not a word for stress, where every man’s a singer and the storyteller’s king” (qtd. in White 27). This text mirrors Bougainville’s initial description of Tahiti in its emphasis simple pleasures and suggestion of an easy, simple life in Polynesia.

Thus, I have come full circle in my description of Western discourses on Polynesians. According to Mowforth and Munt who bring the concept of othering in conjunction with tourism, “western lifestyles can be denigrated as empty, culturally unfulfilling, materialistic, meaningless, while on the contrary, Third World cultures are bestowed

with meaning, richness, simplicity and, of course, authenticity” (73). Advertisements of Polynesia – and in my perspective the same principles also apply to movies – portray it as traditional, authentic, simple, sensual and rich in experiences, thereby attempting to position it in contrast to modern Western societies (White 26). In advertisements the indigenous population is frequently depicted as carefree, hospitable and attractive and it is suggested that encounters with natives are characterized by genuine friendliness and intimacy (White 35). Thus, it seems that Polynesia nowadays as almost 250 years ago, is represented as utopian place where Westerners can evade the complexities and artificiality of their own modern societies and find the fulfillment of their escapist dreams in the ‘primitive’ but authentic Other. As I will argue in chapter five, current Romantic representations of Polynesian village life in *Moana*, aim to satisfy the same Western dreams and desires. After this overview of Western images of Polynesia, I will conclude this chapter with a comparison of Western representations of Polynesians and Native Americans in the next section.

4.3 The Comparison of Native American and Polynesian Representations

When comparing Western representations of Native Americans and Polynesians numerous parallels regarding patterns, fluctuations and functions can be observed which can be linked to the concepts of ethnotyping and othering. The portrayals of indigenous people from Oceania continues the tradition of Western representations of Native Americans, including the recourse to ideas of the Golden Age, as well as the dichotomy between ‘noble- and ignoble savage’. In the Oceanic as well as in the North American context, the tropes of ‘noble- and ignoble savage’ have existed alongside each other from the moment of the first encounters. This corresponds to Leerssen’s concept of *imageme*, i.e. accumulation of contrasting images. Positive and negative representations have fluctuated throughout time. In some periods positive images dominated Western discourses, at other times negative portrayals were more prevalent, depending on the relationship of Westerners with indigenous populations, which corresponds to Leerssen’s oppositional pattern of weak versus strong. When Native Americans and Melanesians resisted Western incursions, they appeared strong and were portrayed negatively as can be observed in Puritan literature as well as in

missionary reports from the South Seas. However, when Native Americans as well as Polynesians were believed to be at the verge of extinction and appeared weak, they were romanticized in literature as well as in anthropological studies. Leerssen's contrast of center versus periphery also applies to discourses on Polynesians and Native Americans. Both have tended to be represented as traditional, stagnant and close to nature in contrast to a modern and dynamic West.

Ethnotypical representations of Polynesians and Native Americans have largely ignored commonalities while exaggerating particularities, such as cannibalism or scalping. Frequently, Western portrayals of indigeneity have been shaped by already existing preconceptions and have been based on second-hand experience rather than on personal experience. Western discourses on Native Americans and Pacific islanders were and still are similar in the aspect that they are mostly determined by Europeans and Americans. The indigenous populations themselves tended to lack influence regarding their own representation, although this has begun to change in the latter part of the 20th century. South Sea islanders as well as Native Americans have frequently functioned as mere backdrop for the action in novels and films. They have tended to occupy the role of the Other serving as a mirror-image for a Western audience (Baumann 20). In this way, they have frequently been either idealized or denigrated. Idealization, for instance, occurred in 18th century Romantic notions of 'noble savagery' and can also be encountered in the contemporary 'primitive' Other of Polynesian tourism advertisements, which promise authenticity as well as intimacy. Examples of degradation surfaced in 19th century portrayals of Polynesians as tattooed cannibals as well as in Westerns depicting 'Indians' as scalping 'savages'. Dreams as well as nightmares about the indigenous Other seem to be less connected to actual living circumstances of indigenous people but instead appear to be reflections of Western self-conceptions. The indigenous Other appears to have various functions for the Western Self. Firstly, representations of Native Americans and Pacific islanders frequently serve to explain large-scale social events and justify activities of Westerners. Land seizure and genocide of Native Americans by European settlers, for instance, could be justified by stereotyping Native Americans as 'ignoble savages' and portraying them as a threat. Similarly, emphasis of supposedly Polynesian practices such as infanticide and cannibalism served to legitimize missionary engagement in the region and imperial 'civilizing' missions. Secondly, representations of Native Americans and Polynesians also appear to have a self-validating function such as

confirming ideas about Euroamerican 'racial' superiority in contrast to indigenous 'racial' inferiority. Thirdly, indigenous peoples of North America and Oceania have frequently functioned as a screen onto which utopian and escapist fantasies could be projected and Western civilization could be critiqued. In this sense representations of the indigenous Other have suggested possible alternative lifestyles for Enlightenment thinkers, Romantic writers, hippies, ecologists, anthropologists and tourists.

Having examined the long tradition of ethnotyping of Native Americans and South Seas islanders, I will now turn to analyze how these groups are represented in *Moana* and *Pocahontas*.

5 Film Analysis

In this chapter, I will analyze representations of the indigenous Other in *Moana* and *Pocahontas*. I will rely on insights from the previous chapters regarding the functions of stereotyping, ethnotyping and othering as well as on findings the methodology chapter and the intertextual analysis. In accordance with Faulstich's film analysis model, my analysis will concern plots, characters and the composition of the films. Eventually, I will integrate the individual results in my analysis of forms and functions of indigenous ethnotypes.

5.1 Plot Analysis

5.1.1 The Plot of *Pocahontas*

Pocahontas begins in London where English colonists, among them John Smith, are depicted boarding the ship of the Virginia Company. The destination of the party is America, where they hope to find gold. As the ship crosses the Atlantic it gets caught in a storm and John heroically rescues sailor Thomas after he goes overboard.

The Native Americans are introduced with images of harmonious tribal life and nature. Chief Powhatan promises his daughter, Pocahontas, to Kocoum, the best warrior of the village. Pocahontas, unhappy with her father's choice, wanders into the woods where she talks to Grandmother Willow, an ancient tree, and contemplates that there is much more than marriage waiting for her.

When the English arrive in America, they immediately claim the land for the crown, clear the forest, commence to build their settlement and begin digging for gold, destroying nature in the process. While the rest of the party is busy, John scouts the land and meets Pocahontas, who has been spying on him. John initially wants to shoot Pocahontas but, smitten with her beauty, instead tries to get to know her better. The language barrier is quickly and magically broken and John, certain of the superiority of the English, tells Pocahontas how the Europeans will improve the lives of the natives by building infrastructure and teaching them how to make best use of the land. Pocahontas is offended, rebukes John for his feelings of superiority and instead

provides John with a new perspective by teaching him how to connect with nature and appreciate all human beings.

While Pocahontas and John break cultural barriers and fall in love, a skirmish occurs between the Native Americans and the English. Tension increase, as the Powhatans plan to expulse the English from the land with the help of allied tribes, while Governor Ratcliffe, convinced that the Native Americans possess gold, schemes to attack their village. Meanwhile, Pocahontas and John come to reject the chauvinism of their respective communities and intend to reconcile both sides.

Before they can realize their plan, Kocoum discovers the lovers in the woods and jealously attempts to murder John. Thomas, who has secretly followed John, prevents this by killing Kocoum. Nevertheless, John is captured in the aftermath and his execution is scheduled for the following day. On the morning of the execution, English and Native American troops meet ready for battle. However, Pocahontas convinces her father to spare John. Additionally, the chief declares peace, which is celebrated by both sides. This does not suit Ratcliffe who attempts to instigate violence by attempting to shoot the chief. John, however, takes the bullet to rescue the chief. In the end, Ratcliffe is arrested by his own men and the English and the Native Americans are reconciled. While John returns to England to get medical treatment, Pocahontas realizes that her place is with her tribe and stays behind.

5.1.2 The Plot of *Moana*

Moana begins with grandmother Tala telling the legend of how the island goddess Te Fiti created life through using her heart. Darkness and death, however, started to spread across the world when demigod Maui stole the heart of Te Fiti and Te Fiti degenerated. Shortly after his theft, Maui was confronted by the demon Te Kā, and lost the heart of Te Fiti in the ocean. According to the legend, someone will help Maui to restore the heart and save the world.

One millennium later the toddler Moana listens excitedly to her grandmother's tale. Moana is the daughter of the village chief Tui. She is destined to be the future chieftess and grows up among the villagers of Motunui. Moana, always attracted by the ocean, wants to venture out onto the sea. Yet, the traditions of the island and especially her father, prohibit anyone from going beyond the reef and Moana eventually accepts her

role on the island. Harmonious island life comes to an end, however, when the crops wither and the fish disappear endangering the subsistence of the community.

Grandmother Tala helps Moana realize that she is the chosen one to restore the heart of Te Fiti to end the blight on Motunui. As a toddler, Moana received the heart of Te Fiti in the form of a gem-stone from the ocean and grandmother Tala had kept it safe for her. The grandmother returns the stone to Moana and shows her a cave where a fleet of boats of the ancestors of her people is hidden. Thus, Moana discovers the forgotten seafaring tradition of her people. Against the will of her father, she secretly leaves the island with one of the boats to find Maui, help him restore the heart and save her community. She finds Maui, who is marooned on a deserted island, and although he is resistant initially, she convinces him to join her on the mission. Together they defeat the Kakamora, coconut-like creatures who attack them to steal the heart. With the help of the ocean, Moana and Maui successfully overcome many challenges and manage to retrieve Maui's long-lost magic fishhook, which restores his superhuman powers. On the way to Te Fiti, Maui teaches Moana how to navigate. After a final fight with Te Kā, they replace the heart, balance is restored, and the world is saved. Moana returns to Motunui, where she shares her new navigational knowledge and reconnects her people to their ancient seafaring tradition.

The plots of *Moana* and *Pocahontas* differ in some aspects. *Pocahontas* revolves around the theme of overcoming intercultural conflict through romance, which necessitates the contrast of the English and Powhatans. Explicit juxtaposition of indigenous and Western cultures is omitted in *Moana*, which foregrounds the themes of ecological disaster and personal growth of the protagonist. Despite these differences, *Pocahontas* and *Moana* also share various similarities. At the beginning, both movies depict a paradisiacal environment in which indigenous people lead idealized lives. Soon paradise is disturbed as conflict is introduced, in the case of *Pocahontas* through the arrival of greedy colonizers, and in *Moana* as a result of the blight which is a consequence of Maui's theft of the heart of Te Fiti. In both movies, the protagonists come of age while they try to solve the respective crises of their communities. In the course of events they independently act against the wishes of their overprotective fathers and the traditions of their communities, venture out, mature as they save their worlds, realize who they truly are and return to their communities

accepting their place within their societies. The similarity of the plots is paralleled by the similarity of the character, which I will discuss in the next section.

5.2 Character Analysis

Having considered the plots, I will now analyze the most important characters of both films regarding the representation of indigeneity. In my analysis of *Pocahontas*, I will consider English characters, as they are largely constructed in contrast to the Powhatans. Although *Pocahontas* and *Moana* are located in different times and places and were released twenty-one years apart, they are very similar regarding the makeup of the characters of Moana and Pocahontas, the respective chiefs and grandmothers and the representation of 'ignoble savages'. The comparison of the characters from both movies will be incorporated in the analysis of *Moana*.

5.2.1 Characters in *Pocahontas*

5.2.1.1 Pocahontas

Pocahontas, the native protagonist of the movie, has many traits stereotypically attributed to the 'noble savage', but also some Western characteristics. Pocahontas wears a white dress which allows much of her skin to be visible. She is tattooed, has straight, black hair, black eyes and a dark complexion and, hence, might be recognizable as indigenous. According to Ward, however, Pocahontas has a lighter complexion than the rest of her tribe (Ward 36). Similarly, Glen Keane, the supervising animator, states that Pocahontas constitutes "an 'ethnic blend,' whose convexly curved face is African; whose dark, slanted eyes are Asian; and whose body proportions are Caucasian" (Fruzińska 100). This prompts Fruzińska to conclude that Pocahontas "is not a Native American but a generic Other" (100).



Fig. 1: Pocahontas as "generic Other" with lighter skin-color than her father [Pocahontas 12:02-13:09]

Pocahontas appears brave, adventurous, independent and strong-willed while at the same time caring, harmonious and spiritual. Already the introduction of Pocahontas emphasizes her individualism and exceptionalism. While the whole village gathers to celebrate the return of the successful warriors, Pocahontas is alone in the wild and stands on a rock spur. When she jumps off this high cliff it serves to illustrate her bravery. Her courage is plot-changing at the end of the movie, when she saves John's life by offering to sacrifice herself, thereby following the traditional trope of Native American princesses as saviors and supporters of white men (Green 703). Pocahontas proves her self-reliance by disobeying her father's orders to remain in the village and avoid the English when she leaves to pursue romance with John. Through her relationship with John she also ignores her father's wish to marry Kocoum. Pocahontas desires more than the tranquil village-life and an arranged marriage and frequently wonders what destiny might hold in store for her, as for instance, when she sings "What's around the riverbend?" [13:12]. Thus, Pocahontas is characterized as exceptional, self-reliant and individualistic, which appear to be Western values (Fruzińska 78). The caring side of Pocahontas is foregrounded through her interactions with her animal friends, which she rescues various times. Pocahontas' harmony with nature is illustrated through her numerous skills such as climbing, steering a canoe, skulking, her ability to hide in the undergrowth of the forest and her knowledge of the land. Also, she communicates with animals, the giant tree called Grandmother Willow and even understands the messages of the wind. As Pocahontas remarks in the song *Colors of the Wind*, "[t]he rainstorm and the river are [her] brothers / [t]he heron and the otter are [her] friends" and thus she is constructed as deeply connected to nature, which manifests itself in her critique of the colonizers' exploitation and destruction of the land [41:25].

This characterization of Pocahontas as close to nature echoes the trope of the 'noble savage' and her critique of European destruction of the environment stand in the 1970s tradition of positioning Native Americans as 'ecologically noble savages' (Huhndorf 17). Pocahontas' belief that everything is connected and that "every rock and tree and creature [...] has a spirit" appear to follow the New Age tradition of perceiving Native Americans as spiritually wise [40:08].



Fig. 2: Pocahontas as ecological teacher [Pocahontas 40:02]

Although Pocahontas is portrayed in the 'noble savage' tradition as spiritual and ecological Other, she also embodies numerous values typically associated with the West. Her strong wish for independence and quest for self-realization appear to be linked to the popular Western notions of individualism (Ward 105). Being individualistic, Pocahontas disregards the wishes of the men and asserts herself. She refuses, for instance, the prospective husband chosen by her father and chooses John instead. Pocahontas also appears as a strong woman when she criticizes John's Eurocentric perspective and challenges his superiority complex by teaching him respect for the environment as well as lessons in spirituality (Naidu Parekh 169). Eventually, it is also Pocahontas who convinces her father to come to peaceful terms with the English.

The portrayal of Pocahontas as strong, independent and assertive woman who succeeds in overcoming patriarchal traditions and makes her own choices carries feminist undertones. In my opinion, Pocahontas' representation appears to rather

reflect the zeitgeist of the 1990s and Disney's attempts to create an emancipated role model than historic 'realities' of indigenous women. The construction of Pocahontas as exceptional character more aligned with modern values, as illustrated by her wish to escape static tribal life, furthermore, foregrounds the restriction of individuality exerted by the community of indigenous Others in the movie (Bradford 178-179). The hypothesis that Pocahontas might partly be a Westernized character is further supported by her speaking with an American accent, in contrast to the other tribespeople, who have Native American accents (Mitchell-Smith 219).

Taking these Westernized facets into account, Pocahontas appears to be a synthesis of Self and Other. On the one hand, she is constructed as a typical spiritual and environmentally friendly 'noble savage' princess; on the other hand, she represents modern values, such as individualism and emancipation, possibly to make it easier for Western audiences to identify with her.

5.2.1.2 Chief Powhatan

Pocahontas' father, Chief Powhatan is portrayed with the use of many ethnotypes about Native Americans and embodies the 'noble savage'. He exercises benevolent authority, is well respected by his community. Chief Powhatan is old, wise and dignified. Much of his wisdom seems to stem from his closeness to nature. He uses the river, for instance, as a metaphor to teach his daughters life lessons and to support his ideas, as for instance when remarking that "[e]ven the wild mountain stream must someday join the big river" [12:00]. Chief Powhatan wants the traditions to continue as they are and wants to preserve his tribe. When threatened by the English colonists he does not hesitate to go on the warpath turning from benevolent leader into hostile 'savage'. However, at the end of the movie he is depicted as tolerant and forgiving, as he prefers a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

5.2.1.3 Kocoum

Kocoum is an excellent example of ambiguous portrayal of the indigenous Other, as he transforms from 'noble' to 'ignoble'.

Kocoum is of dark complexion and has long black hair worn in form of a Mohawk haircut and adorned with a feather. He is tall, muscular and half-naked, which makes the bear-tattoos on his chest visible. Kocoum is courageous and loyal as demonstrated when he rescues a wounded warrior during a skirmish with the English and carries him from the battlefield at the risk of his own life. He is described as reliable by chief Powhatan, who expects him to provide for his daughter. Pocahontas, however, describes Kocoum as "so serious" and indeed he hardly shows emotions and speaks little, which corresponds to the stereotype of the stoic Native American already in existence in the play *Metamora* [11:25]. According to Berg, stereotyped Others tend to be restricted to short lines in dialogues and frequently exhibit a lack of humor and narrowmindedness (51). Kocoum complies to Berg's description of stereotyped Others, and is positioned as antagonist to John, who jokes frequently and has long lines exhibiting complex thoughts.

Despite some positive attributes ennobling Kocoum, he is also portrayed in more negative terms, which is typical of imageemes as mentioned in chapter two. He is full of hatred for the colonists and is the first to propose an attack on them. Eventually, when Kocoum witnesses the kiss between Pocahontas and John and ambushes his rival he becomes 'ignoble'. In that sequence, which will be studied in detail in the compositional analysis, Kocoum is portrayed as bloodthirsty and full of uncontrollable rage. Hence, in the persona of Kocoum the old trope of the 'ignoble savage' resurfaces, accompanied by the trope of the 'vanishing Indian', as he is tragically shot moments later. At a narrative level Kocoum serves as John's rival and foregrounds the supposed savagery of Native Americans.

5.2.1.4 John Smith

John Smith is the white protagonist and much of the action is shown from his perspective, which invites spectators to identify with him. He has blond hair, blue eyes, is muscular, tall and appears very masculine. John is an adventurer which becomes obvious when he swaggeringly strides towards the ship carrying a sword and a gun,

while a sailor remarks that “you can’t fight Indians without John Smith” [01:12]. Through this remark, John is, from the very beginning, positioned in an antagonistic relationship to the Powhatans he will later meet. When he gets to know Pocahontas, John is depicted as Eurocentric, convinced of the superiority of the English in contrast to the Native Americans and a fierce believer in the civilizing mission as illustrated when he remarks: “There’s so much we can teach you. We’ve improved the lives of savages all over the world” [38:40]. His worldview, however, is challenged by Pocahontas, who criticizes the greed, materialism and environmental destruction of the colonists. She teaches John how to perceive and enjoy nature with all senses and to regard all animals as his friends. John adopts this supposedly Native American worldview and as he abandons greed becomes disinterested in the English quest for gold. Instead of fighting the natives, he defends them against his countrymen and tries to resolve the conflict peacefully.

In chapter four, I considered the going ‘Indian’ myth as discussed by Baird, which is useful now to understand two implications of John’s transformation (*Discovery* 196-197). Firstly, by going native, John symbolically resolves conflicts between colonists and Native Americans and creates a new American identity from both ethnicities. At the end of the film, John is represented as combining the ‘best’ of Powhatan as well as English culture, such as ecological and spiritual awareness on the one hand and self-reliance, optimism and adventurous, pioneering spirit on the other. By going native John abandons racism and materialism for humanism, environmentalism and spirituality and differs greatly from the other English characters. John’s exceptionalism is underlined by his American accent, which contrasts with the British English spoken by the other colonists. Secondly, in accordance with Baird’s theory, John’s role appears to consist in absolving Americans from their historic guilt about the treatment of Native Americans (*Discovery* 197). Becoming enlightened, John recognizes the errors of his own prejudices and the humanity of Native Americans and defends them by risking his own life, eventually achieving reconciliation.

5.2.1.5 Governor Ratcliffe

In contrast to John, Governor Ratcliffe is the arch-villain of *Pocahontas*. His negative role is underlined by his physical appearance. He is obese, has a beaked nose and his mimicry is mostly grim, arrogant or smug. He is represented as effeminate, wearing

bright purple colors, long hair with ribbons and high-heels, which probably function to foreground his aristocratic background. Speaking Received Pronunciation, Rattcliffe clearly stands for the English and embodies the negative side of colonialism. His unfavorable traits include arrogance, decadence, materialism, selfishness and ruthless brutality. He is depicted as scheming warmonger and despot and does not only destroy the pristine environment of the 'New World' in his greed for gold but also aims at annihilating the native population. Rattcliffe, thus, forms a negative contrast to the communal, spiritual and ecological Powhatans as well as to Americanized John. Through the character of Rattcliffe American guilt about its own genocidal history can be externalized and American spectators who are invited to identify with John can easily distance themselves from historical blame, which is not ascribed to the American Self but to the English Other.

As can be seen, Disney largely adheres to traditional Western representations of Native Americans by peopling *Pocahontas* with 'noble and ignoble characters' and relying on stock characters such as the 'Indian' princess, the chief and the savage warrior. Similar characters and character constellations occur in *Moana*, as I will demonstrate in the next section.

5.2.2 Characters in *Moana*

5.2.2.1 Moana

Like Pocahontas, Moana is the teenage daughter of a chief and desires to experience more than familiar, traditional life in her indigenous community. She stands out from the rest of the island population not only because of her noble birth which destines her to become the future chieftess but also because she is attracted to the ocean and wants to explore the world beyond the island. Her spirit of discovery is illustrated in various sequences showing her attempts to paddle out onto the ocean, even as a small child. Moana, which means ocean in numerous Polynesian languages (Taimara et al. 218), has a special relationship with the sea. Already as a toddler, she receives the heart of Te Fiti from the sea. Later Moana is able to communicate with the ocean, which functions like a proper character protecting, encouraging and guiding her on adventures throughout the movie. Although she wants to explore the ocean, Moana first accepts her role on the island and prepares to become a future leader singing

“everybody on this island has a role on this island, so maybe I can roll with mine” [17:28-17:36]. However, the question of what destiny might have in store for her, as in the case of Pocahontas, remains alive.

Moana is an attractive Disney princess with long, slightly curly hair, a dark complexion and dark eyes. She is marked as Polynesian Other through her darker skin-color, her traditional Polynesian clothes, her knowledge of Polynesian mythology and her ability to perform traditional dances. Moana differs from other Disney princesses, as she is not disproportionately skinny but has curves, strong calves and broad feet (Dunsmore). Thus, unlike sexualized Pocahontas with her Barbie-doll proportions, she appears more realistic than other Disney princesses (Benhamou 157). In my opinion, this indicates that Disney has responded to previous criticism and attempts to provide a role model that corresponds better to the personal experiences of the audience.

Despite differences in their looks, Moana and Pocahontas share numerous characteristics, which are in line with traditional Western stereotypes about indigenous peoples. They are depicted as close to nature, as ‘ecological noble savages’ and as spiritual. Moana is very skilled at climbing, sailing, swimming and navigating the ocean. Thus, like Pocahontas, she is depicted as effortlessly moving through the natural environment and as being at ease in natural surroundings. As discussed in chapter four, the ethnotype of the ‘ecological Indian’ presupposes that indigenous people live harmoniously with nature, are sympathetic to animals and plants and aim to preserve the environmental balance (Krech 21-22). Moana as well as Pocahontas are depicted as caring for their animal-sidekicks and as concerned with the conservation of the environment. Moana is represented as ecologically minded as she aims to restore natural balance. Also, Pocahontas advocates an ecological lifestyle when she teaches John to respect nature and not view it as a source of profit. Furthermore, both princesses appear spiritual, since they can communicate with their ancestors and nature, be it in form of a willow-tree and the wind in the case of Pocahontas or with the ocean, the spirit of her dead grandmother and the goddesses Te Fiti and Te Kā in the case of Moana.



Fig. 3: Moana communicating with the ocean [Moana 06:43]



Fig. 4: Moana as spiritual Other face-to-face with goddess Te Fiti [Moana 1:32:04]

Despite being represented as indigenous, Moana seems to embody American values as well. She represents gender-equality, individualism and self-reliance, which are values that are held by the majority in most Western societies (Inglehart et al. 9-12; Ward 105). While the other islanders are content with their lot on the island and happily sing “this tradition is our mission”, Moana is intent on breaking with traditions and explore – an aspect which is portrayed as connected to Polynesian seafaring history, but which is also strongly rooted in the European and American history of exploration and colonization [08:13]. Moana’s individualism is illustrated in a sequence in which she disrupts the council where the villagers gather to discuss how to deal with the blight [28:03-28:26]. Rather than discussing and finding a solution together with the other villagers, Moana bursts into the gathering and blurts out her proposal. When she is not able to win the support of her community she goes on the mission on her own.

Disobeying her father and leaving the island certainly demonstrates Moana's independence. Later she asserts herself even against the demigod Maui. In this sense, Moana self-confidently challenges male authority and appears emancipated which also corresponds to Western values (Inglehart et al. 15).

Westernized Moana resembles Pocahontas, who also embodies Western values. Both are distinguished from their respective communities as special and exceptional. Pocahontas and Moana refuse the role they are expected to occupy in their villages and, instead, act independently and individualistically. For both, their traditional indigenous societies constitute obstacles which they need to overcome to find self-fulfillment and experience personal growth. Therefore, Moana and Pocahontas disobey their fathers and break out of their communities. In doing so they appear as strong, modern, emancipated women, which, in my opinion, constitutes a Western projection. Moana as well as Pocahontas are characterized by hybridity as they embody stereotypical indigenous characteristics such as proximity to nature and spirituality in combination with Western values like individualism and gender-equality. Hence, both princesses embody the Self alongside the Other and serve as implicit contrasts for the Otherness of their respective communities.

5.2.2.2 Maui

Otherness is embodied by Maui, who is not only disneyfied but also portrayed with the use of many Western stereotypes regarding Polynesians men. Maui is a demigod with superhuman powers and can shapeshift by using his magical fishhook. Maui is a complex character with a tragic history, who manages to surprise the audience and who undergoes positive development throughout the plot becoming courageous as well as responsible. The character is based on the mythological figure of Maui who is credited with deeds, such as giving fire to humans and pulling islands from the sea in numerous Polynesian cultures (Daniels 34-35).

Some of these legends are mentioned in *Moana*; nevertheless, Maui's representation deviates significantly from Polynesian mythology. While Maui mythologically tends to be depicted as a slender young teenager, Disney portrays him as a fully-grown, extremely muscular hunk and almost overweight (Leslie 27). According to Leslie, Maui was designed with an enormous body so that the many tattoos representing his

achievements could find space on his skin (27). This might be a possible explanation. However, in Western discourses there is a tendency to stereotype Pacific islanders as overweight. In my opinion this stereotype might have resurfaced and influenced the design of the character of Maui (Warbrick, Came, and Dickson 2; Ching and Pataray-Ching 183).

The second significant deviation from traditional mythology is that Maui is much older in the film. Possibly by being an adult he functions as a better contrast to Moana, as some qualities of Moana, such as her assertiveness, might be more visible when in conflict with grown-up Maui. His representation as adult makes it more convincing to position him as a mentor, from which Moana can learn about navigating. First and foremost, however, the changes of Maui demonstrate how Disney appropriates indigenous mythologies and adopts them for Western audiences, significantly altering the content in the process (Ching and Pataray-Ching 182-183). Cultural appropriation and the question of who is allowed to tell whose stories have sparked fierce discussions. Yet, it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to describe these debates in greater detail.



Fig. 5: Hunky, conceited Maui conforming to Western ethnotypes about Polynesian males [Moana 38:54]

Barefoot, dark-skinned, half-naked, with many tattoos, long hair and dressed in a leave-skirt, Maui stereotypically represents the indigenous and primitive Other. Recalling Brislin's summary of stereotypical representations of Polynesians males as "[s]elf-inflated men who preen and strut but are easily fooled by superior Western intelligence – often played comically", the character of Maui perfectly matches this

description (Brislin 106). Maui is boastful as exemplified in the song “Your Welcome” in which he enumerates all his deeds for humanity, and he is frequently depicted walking around conceitedly showing his muscles and tattoos [38:30-41:03]. If Moana is taken to partly be a Western character, then Maui can be interpreted as tricked by Western intelligence, as he is at times successfully manipulated by Moana and coaxed into action. Finally, Maui is also a frequent source of laughter thereby completing Brislin’s description of stereotypes about Polynesian men as being represented as comical. Maui’s representation as a buffoon, not as a trickster as in traditional Polynesian mythology, has resulted in the critique of Disney misappropriating Polynesian culture and can be interpreted as yet another instance of Disneyfication (Tamaira et al. 219).

5.2.2.3 Chief Tui

Chief Tui is Moana’s father and a, like Maui, represents indigenous Otherness. He is well respected by the community and accepted as their benevolent leader. He works alongside the other villagers, which emphasizes the egalitarian trope about Polynesians. Also, he is portrayed as family friendly, devoted to his mother and as loving husband and father. Chief Tui embodies the island’s traditions and desires to impart them to Moana. He wants everything to continue as it is and is afraid of transformations, like Moana’s wish to leave the island. He appears to be well-meaning but ignorant, and, due to his obsession with the maintenance of traditions, fails to react adequately to necessary change. When a food-shortage occurs on Motunui, he does not consider exploring different parts of the sea or moving to another island despite his access to and knowledge of the hidden ships. Thus, he appears to be arrested in old traditions and represents the old stereotype of Polynesians as backward and intellectually dormant, “turning over in the same sleep, with varying dreams” (Lawrence 133). Physically, Chief Tui appears as a less exaggerated version of Maui; big, half-naked, traditionally clothed, barefoot, long haired and tattooed. Chief Tui is represented as the ‘primitive’ Other and in his character the coexistence of contrasting images about indigeneity, forming an imageme, can be observed.

Chief Tui and Chief Powhatan are similar in that they are depicted as caring fathers and well-respected indigenous leaders. Although both chiefs make false decisions, such as entering into war in the case of Chief Powhatan and prohibiting the islanders

from going beyond the reef in the case of Chief Tui, their underlying intentions are depicted as good. After all, they are driven by a deep desire to protect their people.

5.2.2.4 Gramma Tala

The character of Gramma Tala functions as the Spiritual Other representing the traditional trope of indigenous spirituality as well as the power of storytelling (Lacroix 4). She knows the old legends and traditions, firmly believes in them and passes Polynesian mythology on to the children. Gramma Tala's proximity to nature and spirituality is emphasized in various scenes. In one scene she is depicted dancing with stingrays in the water, which symbolizes mutual understanding and respect between humans and animals. At another point she talks about reincarnation and tells Moana that she wants to be a stingray in her next life. After her death, she guides Moana in the shape of a stingray and speaks and motivates her in the form of a ghostly apparition.

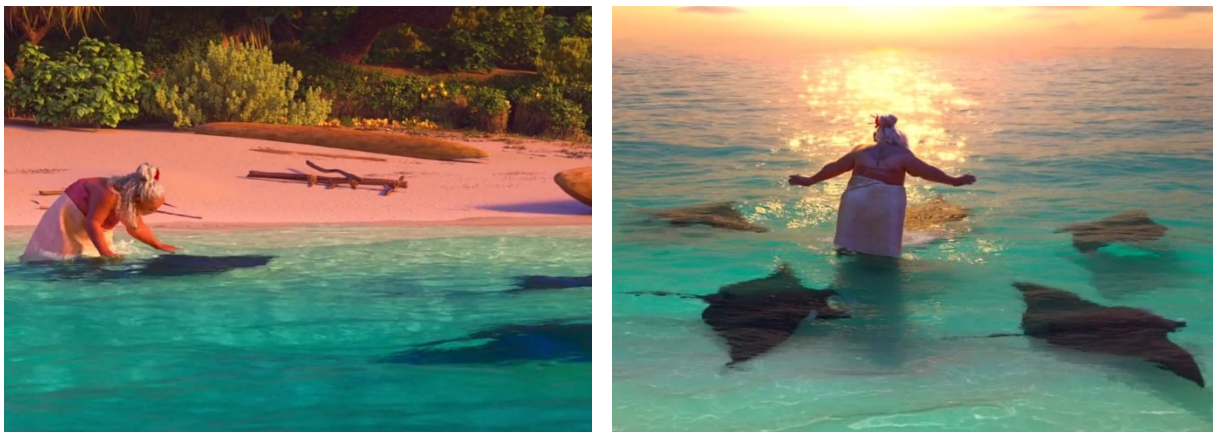


Fig. 6: Gramma Tala dancing with stingrays [Moana 20:49-21:07]

Similarly, in *Pocahontas* Grandmother Willow, who is an anthropomorphic tree, embodies spirituality and natural wisdom as she functions as Pocahontas' spiritual mentor. She advises the Native American princess to let the spirits of the earth guide her. In my perspective, the various scenes depicting intimate conversations between Grandmother Willow and Pocahontas serve to emphasize Pocahontas' connectedness to nature and her spirituality.

As I have demonstrated in this section, numerous characters in *Pocahontas* and *Moana* are represented in the Orientalist fashion of juxtaposing a modern Western Self

with a traditional Other. How Disney uses filmic devices to portray indigenous Others and steers spectator's perception of this Otherness will be the focus of the ensuing compositional analysis.

5.3 Compositional Analysis

For the compositional analysis in this section, I will focus on two sequences from *Pocahontas* and two from *Moana*. I have selected these sequences because they illustrate how Disney uses a variety of filmic devices to represent indigenous Otherness and perpetuates tropes of 'noble and ignoble savages'.

5.3.1 Compositional Analysis of *Pocahontas*

5.3.1.1 Introduction of the Native Americans

This sequence introduces Native Americans [05:40-07:52]. First, drums and Native American chants can be heard. The music has an underscoring function by conveying exoticism and Otherness and helps to contextualize the place as Other, setting the scene for the introduction of the indigenous characters. The first image shows a forested coastline. Then a group of canoes with half-naked Powhatans appears. A bare-chested native sentry with a Mohawk haircut, tattooed and holding a spear blows into a conch to announce the arrival of the group. Another armed sentry hears the sound, runs through the wilderness and repeats the signal. This is followed by images depicting villagers interrupting their chores to gather to welcome the warriors who come home. Indigenous women are shown picking corn, fishermen use spears to catch fish, a child guards the vegetable garden from hungry birds, people carry baskets full of harvest to the village, the medicine man delights children by conjuring blue smoke from a fire, women hang fish to dry and grind grain with a mortar, children play lacrosse, a grandmother walks hand in hand with a child. Eventually, the canoes arrive with the villagers welcoming them. Scenes of families happily reuniting are shown. The chief briefly talks to the medicine man and then announces to the villagers that peace has been restored after successful battle against a rivaling tribe and the tribe responds by cheering.

This introductory sequence contains eight high-angle shots, eighteen eye-level shots and two low-angle shots. High-angle shots are mainly used in combination with long shots to depict larger groups of people and might serve to orient the spectators and to provide an overview, not only of the people but also of the surroundings. The arriving canoes, for instance, are represented through the use of a long-shot from a high-angle as are the people listening to the chief's speech. The high number of eye-level shots which also tend to be close distance shots might aim at establishing the spectator's sympathy and familiarity towards the indigenous villagers. Eye-level shots and close-ups are used to depict indigenous practices and customs, such as lacrosse, harvesting, fishing and preserving food and the close distance might help to emphasize the exotic character of these practices. That the intention of this introductory sequence might be a sympathetic portrayal of the indigenous population is further reinforced by the fact that most Native Americans are shown smiling and laughing.



Fig. 7: Eye-level shots of smiling, traditional Powhatans [Pocahontas 06:17-06:55]

This sequence consists of only two low angle shots, a small number in comparison with eight low-angle shots during the introductory sequence of the English, which is even 37 seconds shorter [00:14-01:49]. The low-angle shots are both of chief Powhatan and probably serve to foreground his authority and convey respect. I assume that the number of low-angle shots is small as to make the Powhatans seem friendly and not threatening. The only two characters repeatedly filmed from a close

distance are the medicine man and the chief, which subtly indicates their future importance and establishes a connection between them and the audience. These two characters are also the only male characters whose upper body is covered by clothing. This might function to make them appear as less primitive, which might help Western audiences to feel more sympathetic towards them. All other characters, clothed in white, are portrayed so schematically that they closely resemble each other and appear to be indistinguishable, producing the effect that the villagers are one homogeneous mass, one body of multiple but interchangeable Others.

In contrast, when the English are introduced, they are depicted with a higher degree of individuality, wearing clothes of different colors and having different hairstyles. Four English side-characters talk with each other in different accents, while only two Native side-characters communicate with each other in the introductory sequence. Thus, a homogenizing effect can be observed in the representation of Native Americans that contrasts with a more heterogeneous and individual manner of representations of the English, even when they are represented in groups.



Fig. 8: Representations of the heterogeneous English compared with the homogeneous Powhatans [Pocahontas 01:37, 07:33]

In the introductory sequence, Native Americans are positioned as indigenous Others through a variety of signs. Most notably, almost all men are bare chested, women also expose much skin of a darker complexion and the majority are barefoot. Many Native Americans in *Pocahontas* are tattooed, while none of the English have tattoos. Tattoos have traditionally served as an indicator of the exotic and primitive and of Otherness and fulfill this very function in the introductory sequence (Werner 11). Different hairstyles such as the Mohawk foreground difference. Besides Othering through emphasizing different physical features, the depiction of exotic practices such as spearfishing harvesting, grinding corn with a mortar as well as the portrayal of children

playing lacrosse serves to mark indigenous Otherness (Byrne and McQuillan 116). Many of these scenes show indigenous characters in a natural environment of forests, fields or near the river, thereby establishing a connection between the landscapes and its inhabitants, the main message being that Native Americans are natural.



Fig. 9: The Powhatans surrounded by green and blue colored natural scenery [Pocahontas 06:01-07:02]



Fig. 10: Family scenes conveying a sense of community [Pocahontas 06:57-07:40]

In my perspective, Powhatan village life is portrayed in the 'noble savage' tradition of Romanticism (Berkhofer 76). The villagers are shown as working collaboratively and harmoniously side by side. Old and young are depicted next to each other, various scenes show happy families and almost all characters are depicted in collectives. Thus, this introduction represents Native Americans as communal as well as industrious. All the villagers look healthy and happy and neither internal conflict nor negative aspects such as illness or poverty are shown. The society represented appears to be very egalitarian, as the only two people with special status are the medicine man and the chief. These idealized representations of Native American as living close to nature and in harmony with each other is corroborated further through the lyrics of the accompanying song:

O Great Spirit, hear our song
Help us keep the ancient ways
Keep the sacred fire strong
Walk in balance all our days. [06:40-06:49]

Additionally, at a less conscious level, the use of colors underlines the impression of Native Americans as spiritual, harmonious and natural Others. The predominant colors in this sequence featuring forests and rivers are green and blue. According to Heller, in the West blue tends to be associated with sympathy, harmony and spiritual virtues, while green is connoted with nature, pleasantness, life and health (23, 106-107). The color white is typically attributed with the symbolic meaning of peace, innocence and purity (Heller 163). Consequently, the white attire of the Native Americans reinforces the impression of a utopian and peaceful indigenous village.

To sum up, numerous devices such as filmic composition, background music, bodily representation, portrayal of artefacts and customs and the use of positively associated colors are employed to signify indigeneity and 'nobility'.

5.3.1.2 Kocoum as 'Ignoble Savage'

In contrast to the positive depiction in the introductory sequence, this sequence emphasizes the 'ignoble savageness' of Native Americans [58:09-59:40]. Pocahontas and John share their first kiss in a forest clearing while Thomas and Kocoum are hidden separately and watch. When Kocoum witnesses the kiss, he shouts a war-cry, sprints towards the couple and throws John onto the ground. While John lies helplessly on his back, Kocoum attacks him swinging a tomahawk and later tries to stab him with a knife. During most of the struggle Kocoum has the upper hand, while John lies disadvantaged on the ground. Pocahontas tries to end the impending murder and begs Kocoum to stop. However, he just pushes her away carelessly sending her to the ground. At the last moment, Thomas comes to John's rescue and saves him by shooting Kocoum.

Kocoum is constructed as a dangerous threat on various levels. Regarding mis-en-scène, tension is created with an open frame, which suggest that someone or something, which in fact is Kocoum, might be waiting outside the visible frame. His savageness is further conveyed through his jealous and instant attack. The war-cry emphasizes his wildness. Surprised by Kocoum, John and Pocahontas have no time to react. Whereas John is not armed, Kocoum wields his tomahawk crazily. This

positioning of John as the defenseless, innocent victim only increases the spectator's perception of Kocoum's vicious aggressiveness. Much of the fighting sequence is shot from a low-angle, which has the effect that Kocoum appears overpowering and threatening, while John seems vulnerable. Furthermore, through the low-angle shots the spectator implicitly is led to assume the viewing position of John. In this way the spectator is invited to side with John and to perceive Kocoum's rage as even more threatening and intense. Many close shots that are used reveal the expressions on both men's faces. John's desperation is contrasted with Kocoum's hatred and anger signified through his clenched teeth. When Pocahontas begs Kocoum to stop, he reacts by pushing her away violently. This serves to emphasize Kocoum's insane rage. He appears to be beyond reason as he cannot be argued with, not even by a fellow tribeswoman, and appears to be incapable of distinguishing between friend and foe. By pushing Pocahontas to the ground he exhibits violence towards women and shows that he lacks the ability of resolving romantic rivalry peacefully.



Fig. 11: Kocoum as 'ignoble savage' [Pocahontas 58:09-59:40]

The violence of the sequence is underlined by the use of the colors in the background, which are mainly dark, such as grey, black and dark blue as well as red. According to Mattesi, black tends to symbolize "evil [and] fear" (qtd. in Moreno Brito 26). Red, the color of blood and fire, tends to be associated with danger, anger and violence when

interpreted negatively (Heller 65-66). The symbolism of the colors corresponds to the content shown in the sequence, which evokes feelings of fear and peril. At the level of environmental sound, the desperate struggle of both men is accompanied by the war cry of Kocoum, by grunts and the thumps of the weapons. The background music, which includes drums and trumpets, reinforces the atmosphere of heightened tension and violence.

Clearly, Kocoum is constructed as savage and threatening Other through his half-nakedness, the red war-paint on his bare chest, the Mohawk haircut and his war-cry. The weapons that he uses, tomahawk and a knife, seemingly made of bone, are indications for his primitiveness and additionally signify danger and violence. During his attack on defenseless, unsuspecting John, Kocoum is so enraged that he neither stops nor listens to the pleas of Pocahontas. Consequently, his murder by the colonist, Thomas, appears as a necessary measure of self-defense. The death of Kocoum, who turns into an 'ignoble savage', thus is constructed as inevitable and justified which is further substantiated by the fact that Thomas is never held to be accountable but, on the contrary, develops into a hero as the film progresses.

As the compositional analysis of *Pocahontas* has shown, both tropes of 'nobility and ignobility' are reinforced through filmic devices. Among other factors, light colored clothes highlight the innocence of the Powhatans and the high number of eye-level shots and scenes depicting smiling faces serve to make Native Americans appear as friendly. In contrast, when the intention is to highlight 'ignoble savageness', low-angle shots, martial music and dark colors convey a sense of danger. In the next section, I will study the composition of *Moana* and explore whether filmic devices are used to similar ends.

5.3.2 Compositional Analysis of *Moana*

5.3.2.1 Introduction of the Villagers of Motunui

This sequence introduces the island and its indigenous population portraying indigenous village life in Polynesia as harmonious, communal, traditional and carefree [7:40-11:59]. The camera follows Moana and her family as they explore the village and through time lapse Moana is shown growing up. As in the introductory sequence in

Pocahontas, where techniques of cultivation and Lacrosse are represented, many traditional practices related to subsistence-agriculture and the culture of Polynesian village life are depicted in *Moana*. Islanders are shown planting gardens, unloading and drying fish, harvesting and opening coconuts and transporting bananas and fish with the help of sticks and baskets. The production of fabric and nets as well as the weaving of baskets with coconut leaves is depicted. Cultural practices such as tattooing, drumming, the dancing of various Polynesian dances, royal processions, and greeting by rubbing the noses, based on the Maori greeting called Hongi, are shown (Streiff and Dundes 8). All these practices serve to mark the inhabitants as Polynesians, emphasize the traditional lifestyle of the indigenous people and thereby, as in *Pocahontas*, foreground their exotic Otherness.



Fig. 12: Polynesian cultivation techniques [Moana 07:44]



Fig. 13: The coconut harvest marking Otherness [Moana11:15]



Fig. 14: A fishing scene emphasizing subsistence agriculture [Moana 08:29]

As in *Pocahontas*, the indigenous population of *Moana* is recognizable through bodily features and clothing. All have a dark complexion and men as well as women are depicted with long, curly hair, which is sometimes tied in a knot. All villagers walk barefoot and have tattoos and all men are depicted with a bare-upper body. Many of the male characters have a big, muscular build, which might correspond to the stereotype of Pacific islanders as overweight (Warbrick, Came, and Dickson 2). Similarly, the women are represented as beautiful and graceful, which also conforms to Western stereotypes of female Polynesian as attractive (Brislin 106). Many islanders wear seashell necklaces and flower bracelets and -garlands. The villagers wear traditional fabrics with tones of brown and beige predominating and with Polynesian patterns. They appear similar to each other, but each character is portrayed with varying details, such as different clothing, tattoos, body shapes and hair-cuts and although they are marked as indigenous Others they are represented as heterogeneous. This contrasts with the portrayal of *Pocahontas*' villagers, which, as mentioned above, appear as almost undistinguishable and homogeneous mass. Indigenous people in *Moana*, thus, are more recognizable as individuals than in *Pocahontas*. This acknowledgement of individual differences of indigenous characters in *Moana* might be due to an improvement in animation techniques but it could also be attributed to a heightened awareness of the diversity of indigenous people by the producers and constitute an attempt to avoid obvious forms of stereotyping.



Fig. 15: Heterogeneous representation of indigenous Others with varying physique, clothes and hairstyles [Moana 11:45]

Moana's family stands out slightly from the rest, since they wear red clothes, which indicates nobility, and because they wear traditional headdresses adorned with shells and red feathers on special occasions (Heller 62). Despite occupying a special position, they perform equal tasks as the rest of the islanders. The villagers are depicted working happily alongside each other with men and women, old and young sharing in the tasks. This constructs an image of an egalitarian society, which is further reinforced by the portrayal of Moana's family involved in numerous tasks, such as harvesting and weaving. Most villagers sing together, appear friendly as they smile at each other and at the camera and spontaneously interrupt their activities in order to dance with Chief Tui.



Fig. 16: Gender-equality and egalitarianism conveyed by images of the women and Chief Tui working together [Moana 08:24]



Fig. 17: The happiness of the Polynesians signified through their joyful and spontaneous dancing [Moana 08:03]

The indigenous people of *Moana* are depicted as working diligently but without hurry, having enough time for personal interactions. Poverty and illness appear to be absent in this paradisiacal environment. The villagers of Motunui and the Powhatan tribe are represented in an almost identical manner as joyful, collaborating with each other and enjoying close relationships. A minor difference is that, in contrast to the Powhatans, the Polynesians appear more carefree since they sing and dance in most scenes. Furthermore, there appears to exist a clear division of tasks based on gender in *Pocahontas*, and thus the impression of gender-equality conveyed in *Moana* is not evoked in *Pocahontas*. Aside from these small details, both movies represent the Powhatans and Polynesians respectively as exotic, primitive, intimate, harmonious and deeply rooted in traditions.

Images of landscapes in *Moana* and in *Pocahontas* seem to reflect a harmonious and happy indigenous way of life. The village with its straw thatched, wooden houses and stone-terraces seamlessly blends into the natural environment. Shots of steep mountains, the turquoise sea, sandy beaches and the lush, tropical forest foreground the beauty of the island. The vegetation is rich and diverse with an abundance of flowers and coconut palms and everything is illuminated by the sun. Numerous villagers wear flowers, which can be interpreted as index for their naturalness. This enhances the impression that they are connected to their natural environment. Hence, both introductory sequences of *Moana* and *Pocahontas* appear to be consistent with traditional stereotypes that link indigeneity with proximity to nature.

The composition of this first sequence reinforces the impression of a wholesome and happy society. Predominant colors are brown as well as bright tones of green and blue. In the introductory sequence of the Powhatans, green and blue are also the main colors and, as mentioned above, they connote harmony and naturalness. The various brown tones in *Moana* convey the effect of homeliness and coziness and contribute to a natural and rustic atmosphere (Heller 62). The sequence contains a limited number of long-distance, high-angle shots, which tend to show the landscape and are mainly used as establishing shots. Most shots of characters, however, are close-ups at eye level conveying a sense of familiarity which, as in *Pocahontas*, helps the spectator to establish a sense of connectedness and sympathy with the island population. Numerous shots are also at the eye-level of Moana, which appears to invite the spectator to share her perspective.

Western and indigenous elements characterize the music of this sequence and resembles the music in *Pocahontas*' introductory sequence of the Powhatans. Rhythmic drumming is used to signify indigeneity and serves to anchor the location and the population as Other. Also, the lyrics of the song reinforce the visual message. Egalitarianism is conveyed through the line "we share everything we make" [08:25]. Images of abundance and self-sufficiency are accompanied by lyrics such as "each part of the coconut/that's all we need" and "the island gives us what we need/and no one leaves" [08:54, 09:09]. Emphasis on the traditional lifestyle is explicitly formulated by the verses "Who needs a new song?/This old one's all we need./This tradition is our mission." [08:14]. Like in *Pocahontas*, where the Powhatans sing about "keep[ing] the ancient ways", these lyrics construct indigenous Others as constrainingly traditional, positioning them in stark contrast to Moana's and Pocahontas' love for adventure and individualism [06:42]. As described previously, rhythmic drumming is also used in *Pocahontas* as an indicator of indigeneity. Similarly, the first-person plural in both songs underscores the impression of collectivity conveyed at the visual level.

All in all, the representation of indigenous people in this introductory sequence appears to be in the tradition of the 'noble savage' and paints a picture of a utopian life already present in Bougainville's report and frequently evoked in contemporary tourism advertisements (Kohl 143; White 35). The villagers of Motunui are marked as Other through their bodily features, clothing and traditional practices. Overwhelmingly, they are characterized as joyful, traditional, communal, egalitarian and content with the

status-quo. Thus, they appear to embody Western escapist fantasies about an ideal, harmonious, primitive society (Kohl 149). In this way, *Moana* as well as *Pocahontas* rely on similar strategies for representing 'noble savagery' regarding content as well as composition of the movies.

5.3.2.2 The Kakamora as 'Ignoble Savages'

The representation of the Kakamora in this sequence shows the ambivalent nature of Western fantasies regarding indigenous peoples, which does not only include fantasies about utopian societies, described in the previous section, but about dangerous indigenous tribes as well [45:03-49:10]. The Kakamora appear on a big ship and try to steal the Heart of Te Fiti. These creatures, wearing coconuts as armor, attack Moana's and Maui's boat and manage to take the precious gem. In turn, Moana enters their ship, fights against numerous Kakamora, retrieves the stone and escapes together with Maui, while their adversaries' ship sinks.

I believe that with the Kakamora, 'ignoble savages' enter the prelapsarian paradise of *Moana*. They are constructed as threatening and incomprehensible Others, as they do not speak for themselves, but instead are characterized externally as 'ignoble' by Maui who refers to them as "murderous, little pirates" [45:03]. They are depicted as aggressive and wild and want to take what is not theirs. Their motive for possessing the heart of Te Fiti is not explained and they do not communicate with Moana and Maui but commence to attack immediately, which foregrounds their bloodlust and appears to justify Moana's and Maui's fight with them as self-defense.

Despite some instances of humorous representation, the portrayal of the Kakamora as threatening predominates. They appear dangerous, because of their large numbers, their war-paint, the wearing of bones and masks and because they are armed to the teeth with clubs, spears and poisonous arrows. The many weapons can, thus, be interpreted as indications of threat and aggression. Also, their ship is much bigger and faster than Moana's boat. The threatening aspect is foregrounded by several filming devices. The background music features fast rhythms of drumming as well as trumpets and conveys an atmosphere of danger and tension. The Kakamora's enormous ship is frequently shown from a low camera-angle reinforcing its menacing appearance. In contrast Moana's boat is often, though not exclusively, represented from a high-angle,

which emphasizes powerlessness and vulnerability in the face of the attackers. Close-ups and medium-shots quickly alternate and the frequent cuts underscore the rapid action of the sequence and produce a somewhat disorienting effect for the spectator.

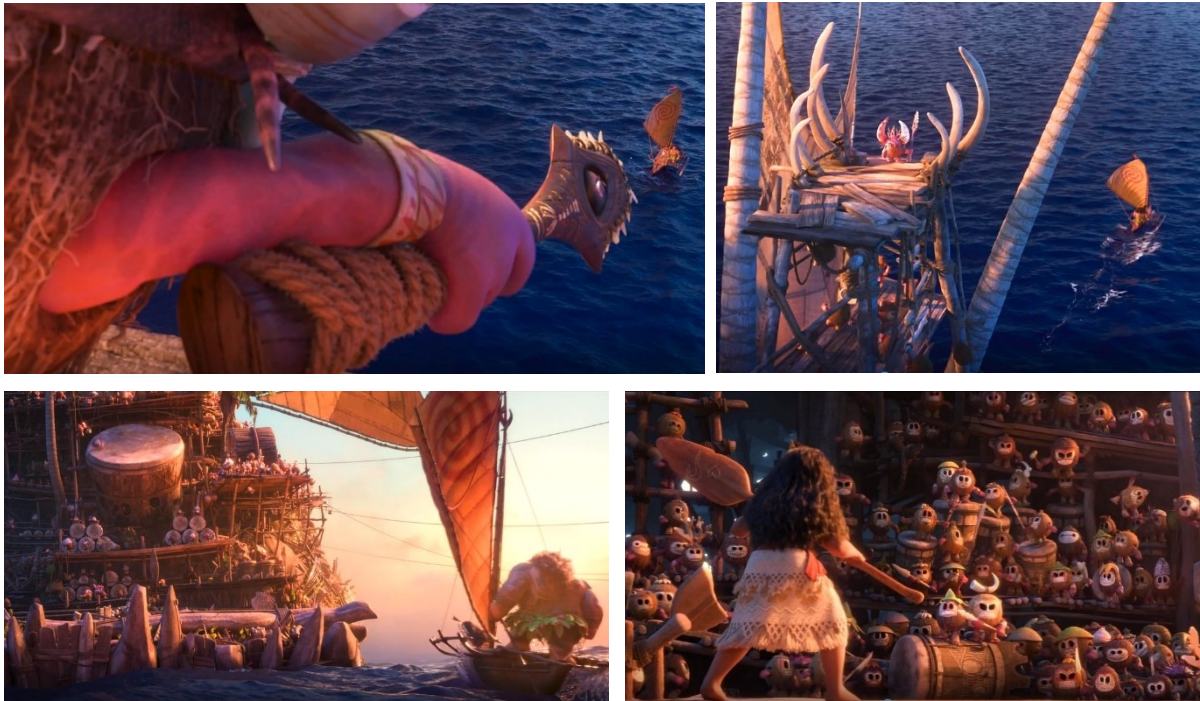


Fig. 18: High- and low angles conveying the vulnerability of the protagonists and the threat emanating from the Kakamora [Moana 45:26-48:01]

According to Samoan legends, Kakamora were short-statured, humanoid tricksters (Tamaira and Fonoti 315). In *Moana*, however, they are not represented as innocent tricksters, but rather as belligerent pirates. In my opinion, the Kakamora create suspense and show a resurfacing of fantasies about violent and dangerous natives. Such negative portrayals already existed in missionary and imperialist discourses on Oceania, which I discussed in more detail in the intertextual analysis. Like the cannibals of *The Coral Island*, the Kakamora “wield clubs of enormous size and curious shapes”, wear white and red war paint and are almost naked, that is if the coconuts are assumed to be parts of the body and not clothing (Ballantyne 138). Recalling how Grimshaw referred to Melanesians as “people [...] nearer to monkeys than human beings”, her statement can also be applied to the Kakamora, which appear as ‘subhuman’ Others (7). Rather than portrayed as real humans, in *Moana* ‘ignoble savages’ are represented as wild creatures clothed in coconuts which, nevertheless, behave in human ways as they have a command structure, carry weapons, cheer and drum and have humanoid body parts such as hands with thumbs.



Fig. 19: The 'savage' Kakamora resembling Ballantyne's cannibals [Moana 45:14-45:26]

In my view, the representation of the Kakamora demonstrates a growing political awareness of Disney producers. Drawing on previous experiences from *Pocahontas* or *Aladdin* (1992), where representations of other cultures as brutal or inferior resulted in severe criticism, Disney appears to avoid allegations of racism by abstaining from representing actual Oceanic tribes as 'ignoble'. Instead, fantasy creatures wearing coconut-armor are employed as proxies for 'ignoble savages'.

As discussed previously, the trope of the 'ignoble savage' is also present in *Pocahontas*, most notably in the sequence of Kocoum's death, which parallels the representation of the Kakamora. The composition of both sequences invites spectators to identify with Moana and John and to perceive the Kakamora and Kocoum as enemies. Kocoum and the Kakamora are represented as primitive and threatening Others with similar signs, such as primitive weapons and war-paint. The background music which features fast drumming and the sound of trumpets creates a sense of tension in both sequences. The use of low-angle shots in the depiction of Kocoum as well as in the representation of the ships of the Kakamora makes the attackers appear powerful and evokes feelings of danger. Correspondingly, high-angle shots are

employed to depict the protagonists, John and Moana, which creates an impression of their relative smallness and vulnerability. Both sequences are similar in that they depict Kocoum and the Kakamora respectively as initiating the violent attacks. The protagonists, in contrast, are represented as innocent victims forced to respond in self-defense. In the end the attacking 'ignoble savages' of both sequences perish. Kocoum dies from a gunshot and the ship of the Kakamora disintegrates. While Kocoum's end is depicted explicitly, the death of the Kakamora is merely hinted at through the destruction of their ship. The demise of 'ignoble savages' in *Moana* and *Pocahontas* is justified as the consequence of the self-preservation of the protagonists and is represented as a necessary evil.

So far, my analysis of plot, characters and composition has demonstrated that *Pocahontas* and *Moana* represent indigenous people similarly to previous Western discourses – primarily as idealized 'noble- or degraded ignoble savages'. In the ensuing subchapter, I will consider the functions of the specific forms of indigenous representations.

5.4 Forms and Functions of Ethnotypes of the Indigenous Other in *Moana* and *Pocahontas*

5.4.1 Forms and Functions of Ethnotypes of the Indigenous Other in *Pocahontas*

In this section, I will focus on the forms and functions regarding the representation of the indigenous Other in *Pocahontas* and I will consider mainly two aspects. Firstly, I will focus on how Native Americans are represented in comparison to previous Western discourses on indigeneity, which I described in my intertextual analysis, and consider what functions these representations serve. Secondly, I will analyze the message conveyed by *Pocahontas*' depiction of the encounter between the Native Americans and the English.

5.4.1.1 The Indigenous Other in *Pocahontas* Compared to Previous Traditions of Representation

Representations of the indigenous Other in *Pocahontas* closely mirror previous Western traditions of representing Native Americans. In *Pocahontas* Native Americans are mainly depicted stereotypically as either ‘noble- or ignoble savages’.

Recapitulating the previous findings from the film analysis, it can be noted that the traditional ethnotype of the ‘noble savage’ predominates. Instances of nobility can be observed in the manner the character of Pocahontas is constructed as well as in the representation of indigenous village-life in the introductory sequence. As described above in the compositional analysis, the image of a utopian indigenous society is represented. Native Americans are depicted as close to nature, relatively egalitarian, family-friendly, communal, spiritual and faithful to their traditions. They seem to be in harmony with each other as well as with the natural environment and “walk in balance all [their] days” [0:06:47]. These representations make the natives appear innocent and content and, in this way, parallel the descriptions by Columbus and later images from the period of American Romanticism (Krech 18; Berhofer 6).

Pocahontas emphasis on representing the Powhatans’ innocence and communality emulates previous patterns of Western discourses on indigeneity. Native Americans are mainly constructed as primitive but happy. This idealization of the natives is intensified through the predominantly negative portrayal of the ‘civilized’ English, who serve as their foil. *Pocahontas*’ contrast of the Powhatans and the English relies on the oppositional pattern of nature versus culture. The Powhatans’ contentment and harmony appear to be linked to their closeness to nature, while English materialism and chauvinism seem to be connected to their ‘higher’ degree of civilization and distance from nature. This oppositional pattern manifests itself in a less developed, primitive level of technology of the Powhatans, which is juxtaposed with the colonists’ reliance on more evolved technology (Ward 53-54). These different levels of technology are shown in the contrast of London’s stone houses consisting of several floors with simple indigenous wooden huts, European guns and canons with Native American bows and arrows and clothed Englishmen with bare-chested Powhatan warriors. This primitive image of the aboriginals is idealized and stands in stark contrast to the representation of the English, who – recapitulating the more detailed description of the compositional analysis – are depicted as principally greedy, naïve,

environmentally destructive and suffering from a cultural superiority complex. Therefore, as in the period of Enlightenment and during the countercultural revolution, representations of indigenous people in contrast to Western societies appear to serve as a means of critiquing modern Western society (Berkhofer 76; Deloria 158). Native Americans are constructed as idealized Others who symbolize positive aspects, including ecological and spiritual awareness and communality, which might be perceived as lacking in the Western, modern Self. In my opinion, this stereotypical idealization of the Native American Other might indicate a certain level of discontentment with modernity regarding aspects such as environmental destruction, alienation and loss of a feeling of connectedness with fellow members of society. In *Pocahontas*, John undergoes a process of transformation in which he goes-native, abandons chauvinism and learns to perceive nature non-materialistically and to conserve it instead of exploiting it. Pocahontas facilitates and enables this process as she teaches John in *Colors of the Wind* that “the Earth is [not] just a dead thing [he] can claim” [0:40:02-0:40:06] and that “[they] are all connected to each other” [0:41:32-0:41:36]. Thus, Native Americans as embodied by Pocahontas are represented as spiritual and ecological mentor figures that teach Westerners to respect nature as well as other cultures.

As Bauman notes, xenophilia and xenophobia constitute two sides of the same coin and correspondingly the trope of the ‘ignoble savage’ resurfaces at times in *Pocahontas* and exists next to the trope of the ‘noble savage’ (21). Ignobility is embodied most prominently by the character of Kocoum who appears threatening, jealous and bloodthirsty when he ambushes defenseless John. As I showed in the compositional analysis, the sequence depicting Kocoum’s attack conveys an impression of ‘ignoble savagery’ through open frames, dark colors, numerous low-angle shots of Kocoum and the use of indices of danger such as weapons and war-paint. Similarly, the warriors of the tribe are depicted as ‘ignoble savages’ when they prepare to “destroy those white demons” and to execute John [51:05]. They are armed with primitive weapons such as clubs, spears, bows and arrows, performing war dances and covered in war-paint. The threatening aspect of the natives is emphasized through the music, which is fast paced and includes drumming, the use of red in combination with dark colors and the large, anonymous crowd of warriors represented. Their high number serves to construct the warriors as powerful and, consequently, dangerous, especially when these images are contrasted with scenes depicting the

lonely, vulnerable figure of John in bonds [1:04:34-1:05:05]. The portrayal of a multitude of wild, armed Native American males conveys the impression that they cannot be controlled. As they are depicted as a large, indistinguishable group of dangerous Others they lose their individuality and are dehumanized. In contrast, Pocahontas mainly appears on her own or together with John. In this way, her individuality is foregrounded to a higher degree and she is positioned as an accessible character who the spectators can get to know and even understand instead of appearing threatening like the warriors of her tribe.

The demonization of the indigenous Other, which occurs in the aforementioned portrayal of Kocoum and the Powhatan warriors as bloodthirsty, is rooted in Western tradition as well, as for instance in the Puritan captivity narrative and numerous Westerns and serves to create suspense in *Pocahontas* (Berkhofer 84-85). The Powhatans are presented as wild and powerful adversaries of the English and thereby complicate the plot. Their representation as ‘ignoble savages’ probably causes spectators to experience – maybe also to relish – emotions such as fear, tension and excitement in the face of their threatening Otherness and in the anticipation of the mounting conflict. As the violent escalation is presented as almost inevitable, the spectator is invited to choose sides. Due to the negative portrayal of the Powhatans, who are othered as aggressors, spectators might opt to identify with the colonists. In this sense, the representation of the Powhatans as ‘ignoble savages’, might make spectators more sympathetic to the English since the colonists’ preparation for war appears justified as they partly act in self-defense. Hence, the message is conveyed that the natives as well as the English are equally responsible for violent encounters. In chapter two, I discussed the explanatory and legitimizing functions of stereotypes, which frequently help to make sense of major events (Haslam et al. 162). *Pocahontas*’ ethnotypes of indigenous warriors as aggressive and wild serve as such an explanation and justification of the colonial past, as they make violent encounters that followed Western encroachment on aboriginal lands understandable thereby justifying them to some extent.

At this point, the representation of *Moana*’s Kakamora merits special attention since it parallels the portrayal of the Powhatan warriors and performs similar functions. As described in more detail in the compositional analysis, the Kakamora, like the Powhatans, are portrayed as overwhelming, armed crowd of ‘ignoble savages’.

Recalling that the superior Self is positively measured against and derives its identity from the inferior Other, it appears that the Kakamora are constructed as deviant 'primitives' at two levels (Jensen 65). Firstly, the Kakamora's 'ignoble savageness' poses as contrast to the 'nobility' of Moana's tribe and foregrounds positive attributes like harmoniousness and stability of the villagers of Motunui. The opposition of the brutal Kakamora and the more 'enlightened' people of Motunui serves to establish a closer connection between the spectator and Moana and her tribe. In this way, the Kakamora appear to take the place of 'primitive' Melanesians, who, as discussed in the intertextual analysis were traditionally juxtaposed with 'nobler' Polynesians. The second level involves the dichotomy between Kakamora and spectators. Through the contrast with the inferior Kakamora the spectators can experience and define themselves as their superior opposite, namely as civilized, peaceful and living in an ordered, modern and secure society. In this regard the representation of the Kakamora follows the age-old trope and functions of the 'ignoble savage'. Bearing in mind that negative stereotypes of an out-group frequently serve to justify their treatment by the in-group and explain the dominance of the in-group, the Kakamora's representation as 'savages', akin to negative representations of Powhatan warriors, might function to legitimize Western past imperialism in Oceania as well as its current economic and cultural penetration of the region (Haslam et al. 162).

Returning to the analysis of *Pocahontas*, indigeneity is not only represented through contrasts of peaceful villagers and wild warriors, but also through subtler representations, as the ambiguous portrayal of indigenous traditions shows. While the traditional lifestyle of the indigenous people is emphasized as positive in the introductory sequence, it is depicted partly negatively in the course of the movie, since indigenous traditions restrict Pocahontas self-realization and obstructs her search for romantic love with John. As I have discussed in the character analysis, Pocahontas is constructed as a hybrid character adhering to Western values such as emancipation and individualism. When Chief Powhatan intends to arrange the marriage of Pocahontas the indigenous Other is juxtaposed with freedom loving Pocahontas [11:03-11:40]. Thereby, Native Americans are constructed in contrast to modern values. While a strong sense of community is idealized in the introductory sequence, it is portrayed negatively in later parts of the film, posing an obstacle to Pocahontas individual wishes, romantic endeavors and personal growth. In this way, indigenous traditions are represented as guaranteeing harmonious communal life as well as

limiting individual freedom. This twofold portrayal of the traditional indigenous society as confining as well as comforting also occurs in *Moana*. Apart from romance, which is not thematized in *Moana*, the conflict of the individualistic heroine with tribal traditions closely mirrors Pocahontas' struggle.

As the case of traditions demonstrates, one aspect of indigenous life can assume a positive as well as a negative meaning. *Pocahontas*, as well as *Moana*, is ambiguous in its representation of indigeneity, oscillating between the tropes of 'noble- and ignoble' savage and presenting indigenous Others as idealized as well as denigrated. In my perspective, these contrasting images afford a breadth of possible interpretations. Thereby, Disney's indigenous people simultaneously cater to numerous needs of the audience, such as the need for a romanticized Other as well as to the necessity of denigrated 'ignoble savages', who serve to create suspense and enable spectators to identify themselves as superior in contrast to dangerous and backward 'primitives' and legitimate heirs to seized aboriginal territory.

5.4.1.2 The Representation of the Cultural Encounter between Native Americans and the English

The previously described positive and negative representations of the Powhatans do not stand alone but are related to depictions of the English with the cultural encounter between the two groups constituting a major theme of *Pocahontas*. In my perspective, the film appears to promote transcultural dialogue and understanding. One of the main messages of the movie is that stereotyping is essentially condemnable (Ward 55). The arrogance and feeling of cultural superiority of the English, embodied by John and the other colonists, is critiqued and revealed to be based on ignorance. John eventually discovers that there is no need to "improve the life of savages" but that he can learn many valuable lessons from the indigenous [0:38:40-0:38:42]. Ratcliffe, who embodies the colonizers' racist, supremacist and genocidal attitude, is depicted very negatively. His attempt to instigate violence is accompanied by his reiteration of stereotypes about Native Americans such as that they are "barely even human" and "they're not like you and me/which means they must be evil" [1:04:10-1:04:17]. For the spectator, who previously has been exposed to romanticized images of indigenous village life and has, most likely, come to sympathize with and maybe even admire Pocahontas, Ratcliffe's stereotypical claims are clearly recognizable as false and manipulative. However,

although *Pocahontas* appears to overtly criticize stereotyping, it cannot escape employing stereotypes in its representation of Native Americans. The film contains numerous stereotypes ranging from the representation of physical aspects, clothing and village life to stereotypes concerning ‘ignobility’ as well as idealization of Native Americans as ‘ecologically noble’. Although the majority of the representations of Native Americans in *Pocahontas* appear to be benevolent rather than negative stereotypes, they still remain stereotypes which function to make the indigenous Other more understandable for Western spectators and cater to Western projections regarding Native Americans, ranging from fantasies and desires to nightmares. Western imaginations regarding natives as holistic and in tune with nature surface, for instance, in the sequence *Colors of the Wind*, in which Pocahontas is constructed as guardian of nature cuddling with bear cubs and closely connected to her natural surroundings as signified when she affectionately touches rocks and trees [40:13-40:32]. Contrastingly, the scenes depicting the capture of John and accompanying the song *Savages* depict Native Americans as cruel, bloodthirsty ‘savages’ bent on the destruction of the colonists [1:00:56-1:05:10].



Fig. 20: Pocahontas catering to Western fantasies about the indigenous Other's connection to nature [Pocahontas 40:13-40:32]



Fig. 21: Projections of Native Americans as ‘ignoble savages’ [Pocahontas 1:00:56; 1:05:10]

When considering how the cultural encounter is represented in *Pocahontas* the construction of history needs to be taken into consideration. *Pocahontas* has been criticized for misrepresenting and trivializing the colonial encounter by various scholars including Ward (37-38) and Bird (2) and I fully agree with this criticism. In *Pocahontas*, the contact between Native Americans and Europeans is mainly represented as a romance between Pocahontas and John and as a process of overcoming cultural barriers. Pocahontas is depicted as indigenous Other who falls in love with the first European she meets and subsequently teaches and helps John. The symbolic message appears to be that the colonists are welcomed to remain in America. Negative aspects such as genocide and displacement of indigenous people, which in fact took place and without which the United States of today would probably not exist, are hardly represented at all. In the song *Savages* the violence of historical encounters is hinted at, as Native Americans as well as English are depicted as eagerly preparing for battle before the conflict is resolved peacefully [1:03:54-1:07:40]. Most importantly, however, in this sequence English and Native Americans are represented as equally infused with hatred and mistrust and equally aggressive. As warmongering and racism appear to be prevalent on both sides, the Powhatans are portrayed as equally responsible for the historical violence. The fact that European colonists were invaders, decimated indigenous communities and conquered the land by force is concealed through the strong focus on the romance between John and Pocahontas, which prompts Ono to say that “*Pocahontas* transforms [...] genocide into a contemporary romance” (qtd. in Ward 37).

Pocahontas’ whitewashing of Western expansion to the detriment of aboriginals coincides with an overall sympathetic depiction of the colonists. The rallying for war and the responsibility for the violence, and thereby the historical collective guilt is assigned to one character, Governor Rattcliffe, who personifies aristocratic England. The remaining colonists realize that the threatening conflict is based on cultural misunderstandings and Rattcliffe’s scheming and are depicted as aspiring to live in peace with the Native Americans. Through this transformation of the colonists and the attribution of guilt to one, seemingly English, character, American spectators appear to be freed from the historical guilt of Native American genocide (Ward 45). In my perspective, *Pocahontas* individualizes racism in the person of Rattcliffe and disguises institutional and structural forms of racist violence that were part of the colonial encounter. Through *Pocahontas*, Disney, as a classical US institution, produces

repeats and exports the American way to see itself as land of individuality, freedom, tolerance, opportunity and progress, which was started by idealistic, hardworking, honest settlers escaping from corrupt, old Europe (Rattcliffe) to build the land of the free.

As I showed in this section, representations of Native Americans in *Pocahontas* follow the classical intertextual tropes of ‘noble and ignoble savagery’. Negative and positive portrayals of the Powhatans can be regarded as Western projections and, among other aspects, appear to constitute a strategy of coming to terms with colonial history. Central themes of *Pocahontas*, colonialism and the juxtaposition of the indigenous Other with the Western Self, appear to be absent in *Moana* at first sight. Nevertheless, these issues resurface in *Moana* and striking parallels in the representations of indigenous Otherness serving similar functions can be found, as I will explicate in the subsequent section.

5.4.2 Forms and Functions of Ethnotypes of the Indigenous Other in *Moana*

5.4.2.1 The Construction of the Indigenous Other

The indigenous Others of *Moana* are primarily represented as inhabitants of a tropical paradise, much like in the romantic dreams of pre-industrial life in Western literature, film and advertising described in more detail in chapter four. The life of the inhabitants of Motunui is idealized as pre-modern as they are represented as joyfully singing and dancing, “shar[ing] everything [they] make” and collaboratively working on their daily tasks [0:08:24-0:08:26]. They live an egalitarian life, except for the slightly elevated status of the chief and his family. Indigenous island life is presented as strongly rooted in traditions, characterized by intimate personal relations and harmony with nature. Idealizations of indigenous village life in *Moana* parallel representations in *Pocahontas*, where Native Americans are also principally portrayed as living in harmony with each other and nature.

These representations of indigenous people in *Moana*, as well as in *Pocahontas*, largely follow the oppositional patterns of ethnotyping discussed by Leerssen. At this

point, I will briefly discuss these patterns from an imagological perspective, before examining the underlying functions of the representations.

Regarding the first oppositional pattern outlined by Leerssen, namely the contrast between North and South, the South is frequently described as “more sensual, collective, more polished, more pleasing” and characterized by “extrovert spontaneity” (Leerssen, *Rhetoric* 276). As I have described in more detail in my analysis of the composition of the introductory scene, Leerssen’s findings about typical representations of the South apply to the representation of the villagers of Motunui with extrovert spontaneity being expressed, for instance, when the islanders spontaneously erupt into singing at numerous occasions during the film. Leerssen’s South-North contrast does not completely apply to *Moana*, however, as the South, according to Leerssen, tends to be associated with a strong hierarchical order, which is definitely not accurate for the indigenous society depicted in *Moana*. Secondly, the contrast between weak and strong nations also can be observed in *Moana*. Typically, weak nations are represented sympathetically or with “benevolent exoticism”, both of which applies to the depiction of the inhabitants of Motunui (Leerssen, *Rhetoric* 277). The weak versus strong opposition can especially be seen in *Pocahontas*, where the Native Americans are predominantly represented as sympathetic underdogs threatened by the ruthless and technologically more advanced English. Thirdly, the oppositional pattern of center versus periphery frequently positions the periphery as static, traditional and in proximity to nature, which is true of the representation of the indigenous Other in *Moana* and *Pocahontas* (Leerssen, *Rhetoric* 277).

By employing these three oppositional patterns, *Moana*’s represents indigenous people very stereotypically and constructs them as the West’s Other. Hall argues that stereotypical representations belonging to discourses which he terms “the West and the Rest” are characterized by

idealization; the projection of fantasies of desire and degradation; the failure to recognize and respect difference; [and] the tendency to impose European categories and norms, to see difference through the modes of perception and representation of the West. (*West* 308)

Idealization, Western projections and Eurocentrism can be observed in the representation of the indigenous Other in *Moana*. As shown in more detail in the compositional analysis of the introductory scene of *Moana*, the inhabitants of Motunui are idealized as ‘noble savages’ living a utopian life. It appears that numerous Western

fantasies are projected onto them. These include the desire for intimacy, of living a life in a close-knit community full of personal and meaningful contact. Regarding the aspect of work, the indigenous Others of *Moana* appear to be content with their work, which seems purposeful and fulfilling and which is conducted collaboratively and joyfully. Competition, unemployment or stress are completely absent from the representation of Polynesian village life of *Moana*. Furthermore, the indigenous society is represented as stable and well-balanced as everybody has a position and is content with his or her place and this equilibrium also extends to the relationship between humans and nature.

In my view, these projected desires reveal some of the dissatisfactions of Western society and appear to adhere to the “Grammar of Reverse Mirror-Imaging” in that they appear to represent that “what got twisted in us (still) remains straight in them” (Baumann 20). Bocock summarizes various academic positions regarding Western discontent with the modern world dating back to the 19th century (261-266). According to Bocock, Durkheim comments on the negative effects of modernization claiming that it causes “increases in rates of mental illness, drug abuse, and suicide in western societies, especially among those groups whose way of life encouraged individual competition, achievement and a sense of inner isolation” (qtd. in Bocock 263). Similarly, as outlined by Bocock, Marx perceives the working conditions of industrial capitalism as a source of estrangement, since workers are forced to do uncreative labor devoid of an inherent purpose, which in turn damages their relations to nature as well as to fellow humans (Bocock 261-262). I believe that contemporary Western societies are characterized by similar dissatisfactions with working conditions, which might be linked to the recent resurgence of neo-liberalism and increasing global competition. Thus, I deem it very likely that the nostalgic depiction of the villagers of *Moana* and *Pocahontas* indulging in meaningful, satisfying labor, partly stems from contemporary alienation from the workplace. The creation of filmic images of the happy, indigenous society of *Moana*, characterized by the absence of elements of modernity such as complex technology, negative aspects of modern working conditions and personal isolation appears to be a Western projection of desires rooted in the disenchantment of the West with the side-effects of modernity. Hence, differences of indigenous Others in *Moana*, as well as in *Pocahontas*, are constructed from a Western viewpoint and serve the fulfillment of Western fantasies of escapism.

In its idealization of indigeneity, *Moana* appears to deliberately select and exaggerate some aspects, as is the case with the portrayal of gender-equality in the society of Motunui. Men and women perform the same tasks, as is the case in a scene in which Chief Tui weaves baskets together with a group of women [08:24]. Additionally, Moana is destined to become the future chieftess and the movie presents it as normal and easy for a Polynesian woman to ascend to the throne. This prompts Hereniko, a co-author of a critical review by Tamaira et al., to state that “[i]n Disney’s version of Polynesia, gender has no importance when selecting a chief” and to enquire whether Disney has “not adequately researched ancient Polynesia two thousand years ago?” (Tamaira et al. 220). In my perspective, the representation of gender-equality constitutes a projection of current Western values onto indigenous societies and might not reflect pre-colonial Polynesian societal structures. It is difficult to make assertions about different societies in a region as vast and culturally diverse as Polynesia, which in addition also experienced considerable transformations over the course of time. Nevertheless, as Stearson as well as Hereniko in Tamaira et al. note, many pre-colonial Polynesian societies tended to be overwhelmingly patriarchal, as the Maori of New Zealand (Stearson 98; Tamaira et al. 220). Referring to the example of Hawaii, Stearson argues that relationships between men and women were neither casual nor characterized by equality as it was a taboo until 1819 for women and men to eat together (97). In Hawaii, gender segregation existed in further areas, as women were also not allowed to visit certain temples (Linnekin 15). According to Besnier, kinship structures tended to be based on patrilineality in pre-colonial Polynesia, which can be interpreted as a further indicator of rather male dominated societies in Polynesia (160). Thus, the chances of a chief’s daughter ascending the throne were probably limited, which strongly contrasts with the representation in *Moana*. I do not want to negate that there might have existed civilizations in Polynesia characterized by a high level of gender-equality or matriarchal structures. However, I think that the choice of representing a fictive tribe, which is an amalgamation of various Polynesian cultures such as Hawaiian, Maori and Samoan traditions, as distinguished by gender-equality might be motivated by the aim of making that indigenous population more palatable and sympathetic to Westerners. The portrayal of Moana living in a society characterized by a separation of men and women or strong patriarchal structures would probably contradict Western fantasies of a utopian tropical paradise, as gender-equality currently ranks high in the United States (Inglehart et al. 12). Correspondingly,

the villagers of Motunui are represented as egalitarian and are characterized by equality between men and women so that a Western audience can identify and sympathize with them. I believe that gender-equality would not have been depicted as prominently, if the movie had been produced in the 1950s, for instance, when emancipation was not as evolved in the West. Indeed, *Peter Pan* (1953) shows a clear distribution of gender roles, as Native American women are expected to collect firewood while men idly smoke the peace-pipe. Also, in *Pocahontas*, gender-equality appears to be a minor concern as indigenous men and women, for instance, are shown as performing different tasks for the community. Hence, I believe that *Moana* demonstrates the evolution and current state of the Western values of emancipation and gender-equality which are projected onto the Polynesian Other.

The case of the projection of gender-equality onto the indigenous Other shows that indigeneity in *Moana* is constructed from a Western perspective, which appears undifferentiated and homogenizes multiple Polynesian cultures. The villagers of Motunui are depicted in a simplistic way, complexities of indigenous societal structures are neglected and various elements of different Polynesian cultures, including Samoan, Hawaiian and Maori customs, are jumbled together. Much in the tradition of Orientalism, this constitutes an exotic spectacle for Western audiences (Ching and Pataray-Ching 182). In this way, *Moana*, indeed, adheres to the traditional discourses of the “West and the Rest” described by Hall, since it fails to “recognize and respect difference [and] [...] impose[s] European [and American] categories and norms, to see difference through the modes of perception and representation of the West” (West 308). Idealization and homogenization of the indigenous Other is intertwined with projections of Western concerns onto the ‘Rest’, which in the case of *Moana* surface in form of ecological disaster.

5.4.2.2 The Representation of the Environmental Crisis

The indigenous Other in *Pocahontas* and *Moana* serves as a canvas onto which Disney and the West project the questions that occupy the societies of their time. In *Pocahontas* the issues of globalization, coexistence of ethnicities and multiculturalism, which constituted a great concern of the 1990s, can be observed in the overarching theme of the encounter between Native Americans and English (Benhamou 156-157). Similarly, *Moana* reflects the context of the onset of the 21st century with a central

theme of the film being the ecological catastrophe, which corresponds to the growing worries of many Westerners regarding global warming and environmental destruction. The environmental crisis propels the plot of *Moana* as it threatens the life on Motunui causing Moana to leave in search of a solution. The islanders are represented as living in balance with nature and abstain from causing natural destructions. In this way they resemble the Powhatans represented in *Pocahontas*, who experience environmental destruction caused by the greed of the English. However, when ecological disaster occurs in *Moana*, it is not provoked by humans but by an external, mythological cause, namely Maui's theft of the heart of Te Fiti. Thereby, *Moana* manages to symbolically discuss and even resolve the destruction of nature but simultaneously avoids addressing complicated issues such as the impact of current Western consumerism on the environment and the personal accountability of the spectators.

Destruction of paradise, also known as the notion of 'fatal impact', is a traditional trope in South Sea literature and has been frequently presented as the consequence of the incursions of Western nations (Keown 40). Indeed, due to contact with Europeans, colonization and exposure to European diseases the population of the South Pacific declined drastically. Therefore, many Europeans and Americans in the 19th century became convinced that the indigenous cultures of the South Pacific were destined to vanish (Keown 40). Contrary to these expectations, indigenous populations in that area did not die out. Nevertheless, the native cultures suffered due to contact with the West and the environment was affected negatively as the case of the Marshall Islands, used as a testing grounds for nuclear weapons in the 20th century, demonstrates (Keown 90). In the 21st century, ecological destruction has become one of the most pressing global issues (Leslie 22). Oceania is very vulnerable to global warming, which threatens numerous islands through rising sea-levels and endangers the fragile ecosystems (Tamaira and Fonoti 304). The natural environment of the South Pacific further suffers from increases in tourism and a growing amount of plastic waste in the ocean as Qolouvaki co-author of Tamaira et al. emphasizes (228). Many of these ecological problems are the result of Western modes of production and consumption, of which the Disney enterprise forms a part. Disney not only profits from the sale of plastic toys and other merchandise, but also owns the Aulani Disney resort in Hawaii, and thus has a financial interest in promoting the region for tourism (Tamaira and Fonoti 304-305; Ching and Pataray-Ching 184). Disney's *Moana* will probably

contribute to an increase in mass tourism in Polynesia and, consequently, negatively affect the ecology of the region.

According to Tamaira and Fonoti, the blight in *Moana* can be interpreted as “a metaphor for settler-colonialism in Polynesia” as well as “a metaphor for tourism” (303). Similarly, Grandinetti states that “it doesn’t take much of a stretch of the imagination to see ‘the Darkness’ that threatens Moana’s island as an unintentional allegory for an exploitative industry that continues to devour land and resources for resort development” (2017). While the devastation of nature is addressed in *Moana*, the movie omits the question of the responsibility of the West for this phenomenon. This appears only logical, since *Moana* is set in the precolonial period. However, I would like to argue that by setting the events of the movie prior to the arrival of Europeans and Americans, the producers conveniently avoid addressing the devastating effects of colonialism and circumnavigate the question of Western responsibility for environmental destruction. Since the action unfolds in precolonial times, *Moana* manages to discuss the traditional trope of the fatal impact on a purely symbolical and fictional level, while remaining silent with regard to current problems and responsibilities of the West. The subject of environmental devastation and the consequences of colonialism are only superficially touched and attributed to mythological causes that can be easily resolved. Ching and Pataray-Ching summarize as follows:

[T]he invented plot-initiating legend of Te Fiti’s stolen heart stone removes viewers from intercultural responsibility within the devastating contexts of imperialism, cultural violence, and global capitalism. In Disney’s *Moana*, a single stroke of animation – the destructive force of the Disney deity Te Ka – erases the memory of the physical decimation and cultural dispossession of Native Hawaiians. (188)

Thus, I believe that *Moana*, like *Pocahontas* previously, attempts to avoid thematizing the negative consequences of colonialism and Western responsibility in too much detail, while still relying on numerous traditional tropes such as the fatal impact and ‘ignoble savagery’. That disaster is triggered by a mythological figure, rather than a colonial invader, which could have been a possible choice, only reinforces the portrayal of indigenous people as exotic Others. Moana experiences mythology directly when she learns from demigods, fights and tames angry goddesses, communicates directly with the ocean and is rewarded by Te Fiti. These representations convey the message that Moana, in the sense of the reverse mirror-image, (still) forms part of an organic,

interconnected universe (Baumann 20). The idealization of Moana's innocent immersion in the mythological world might express Western yearnings for spirituality and transcendence and could be taken as indication for Western alienation from rationality and abstract, scientific explanations so predominant in modern societies. Once again, *Moana's* mythological, noble Others appear to reveal deficiencies of the Western Self.

Overall, images of 'noble savages' rooted in mythology, solving environmental problems easily and living idealized, utopian lives predominate. In my opinion these representations can be interpreted as indicators of Western discontent with the complexities of modern societies as they reveal nostalgic longing for the imagined simplicity and authenticity of indigenous communities.

6 Conclusion

In this thesis, I have addressed the question of how indigenous people are represented in the Disney movies *Moana* and *Pocahontas* and examined the functions of these specific representations.

In order to do this, I relied primarily on concepts of stereotyping, ethnotyping and othering, which I presented in chapter two. In the same chapter, I also discussed indigeneity and established that Native Americans and Polynesians, the two ethnicities represented in *Pocahontas* and *Moana*, can indeed be defined as indigenous.

In chapter three, I presented the methodology for this thesis by offering an overview of Faulstich's film analysis model and compositional analysis.

Previous representations of indigeneity in American and European media constituted the focus of the intertextual analysis in chapter four to provide an intertextual background against which representations of indigenous people in *Moana* and *Pocahontas* could be compared and explained. Western portrayals of Native Americans and Polynesians show many parallels and, overall, Western discourses on indigenous peoples from Oceania appear to continue previous discourses on Native Americans. Western representations appear to be ethnotypical and tend to fluctuate between the poles of 'noble- and ignoble savage'. In some periods, Native Americans and Polynesians were constructed as idealized Others, onto which European and American fantasies and desires could be projected. Such Romantic and positive notions of primitivism were frequently used to criticize Western societies and aspects of modernity. At other times, aboriginals were vilified, which justified Western expansion and oppression and confirmed beliefs in 'racial' and cultural superiority, thereby serving to elevate the Western Self. Whether constructed as 'noble- or ignoble savages', indigenous people tend to be represented in contrast to the West, namely as "modernity's other" and as such are frequently stereotyped as traditional, living in unchanging societies and in proximity to nature (Hundorf 14).

Having established this overview of Western discourses on indigeneity, I conducted a detailed film analysis in chapter five. I studied the plot, characters, composition and forms and functions of indigenous representations in both movies uncovering a predominance of similarities. Regarding the plot, *Pocahontas* and *Moana* are both

coming-of-age narratives featuring female protagonists who break out of their restrictive, traditional, indigenous societies in order to realize their destiny and return home after they have matured. In contrast to *Pocahontas*, no Western characters appear in *Moana*. However, indigenous characters and their relationships are very similar in both movies as exemplified by affectionate but confining fathers and spiritual grandmothers who serve as mentor figures. Numerous parallels can be found between the protagonists Moana and Pocahontas, who embody the indigenous Other in similar ways. Both move easily through nature, care for the environment and are portrayed as spiritual. Nevertheless, Moana and Pocahontas also represent contemporary Western values such as individualism and independence and are portrayed as emancipated, modern women. In this way, they are contrasted with their indigenous communities. In my perception, the portrayal of Moana and Pocahontas as attempting to escape the tight grip of their traditional societies implicitly criticizes their indigenous tribes as stagnant and backwards.

Together with the study of the plot and of the characters, the compositional analysis served to answer the first part of the research question, namely how indigenous people are represented in both movies. I was able to confirm that in both movies the content of the analyzed sequences in combination with filming devices reinforces established ethnotypes about indigenous peoples and particularly the traditional image of 'noble- and ignoble savages'. In both films the image of the 'noble savage' prevails, although 'ignoble savages', in the role of aggressive and threatening antagonists, can be encountered as well, for instance in the characters of Kocoum and the Kakamora. Benevolent stereotypes dominate, however, and include the representation of indigenous people as simple and exotic, strongly rooted in tribal traditions and living in harmony with nature as well as with each other in utopian societies characterized by a strong sense of commonality. At its core, representations of indigenous peoples in *Moana* and *Pocahontas* appear to be based on almost identical ethnotypes and largely emulate previous Western discourses on indigeneity.

The second part of my research question focuses on the functions of these common representations. One explanation for the continuity of the ethnotypical representation of indigeneity in *Moana* and *Pocahontas* appears to lie in the force of the genre. Indigenous peoples have been constructed as 'noble- and ignoble savages' for centuries and mainstream productions such as *Moana* and *Pocahontas* stay true to

the conventions of the genre in order to fulfill the expectations of their audiences and achieve financial success. The concepts of stereotyping, ethnotyping and othering helps to understand additional functions for the specific portrayals of indigeneity in *Moana* and *Pocahontas*. They explain the attraction that ethnotypes about indigenous people exert on Western audiences. As noted previously, stereotypes support the interpretation and justification of “large-scale social events” (Haslam et al. 162). The events justified in *Pocahontas* are Western expansion and dominance over indigenous people in the wake of colonialism. Thus, *Pocahontas* helps to rationalize the imbalance of power between the West and the ‘Rest’, while at the same time trivializing racism.

‘Ignoble savages’ appear in *Moana* in form of the Kakamora and in *Pocahontas* in sequences depicting ‘Indians’ on the warpath and Kocoum’s ambush. In these instances, old ethontypes depicting indigenous people as barbarous, dangerous and bent on destruction resurface. Besides creating suspense, the trope of the ‘ignoble savage’ helps to justify the aforementioned Western hegemony and disguises historic Western aggression as self-defense. The responsibility for conflict, thus, appears to be attributed to indigenous people as well as Westerners and the dark sides of colonialism and imperialism is hidden. *Pocahontas*, for instance, addresses historical events of colonialism only superficially and light-heartedly. Francis statement that movies about Native Americans tend to reveal “White guilt, White fear, White insecurity [...] [and] project onto Indian characters the uncertainty non-Natives feel about the justice of [their] history and [their] right to occupy the land”, in my opinion, also applies to the Romanization of colonial encounters in *Pocahontas* (107-108). An additional message conveyed through the portrayal of ‘ignoble savages’ in *Moana* as well as *Pocahontas* appears to be that they need to be overcome and kept in check by forces of civilization and modernity. The portrayal of the ‘dangerous, primitives’ Other, hence, foregrounds positive aspects of the Self, such as supposed rationality and civility, and emphasizes Western superiority.

Conversely, the idealized portrayal of indigeneity can be understood as manifestation of Western discontent with modernity. Imagining natives living a communal, utopian, meaningful and ecological life might be a Western strategy to cope with issues such as loss of a sense of community, doubts about one’s own identity, increasing competition and lack of meaning in the workplace. Representations of indigenous communities of *Moana* and *Pocahontas* as traditional, intimate and stable might

answer Western yearnings for clearly delineated borders and a strong sense of identity in an increasingly complex and competitive world. Additionally, the portrayal of Polynesians and Native Americans as conserving nature might also signal concerns regarding the destruction of the environment through Western modes of production and consumption. Idealized representations of indigeneity, hence, appear to convey the message that “what got twisted in us (still) remains straight in them” (Baumann 20).

However, in *Moana* as well as in *Pocahontas* there appears to exist some degree of ambiguity regarding the idealization of the indigenous Other. While tribal life is romanticized on the one hand, it is also implicitly critiqued on the other. This critique manifests itself in the way the indigenous princesses are presented. Moana and Pocahontas stand out from their respective societies and can be interpreted as representatives of certain Western values such as individualism, self-reliance and gender-equality (Inglehart et al. 9-12). Due to their exceptionalism and their independence, Pocahontas and Moana conflict with their traditional and static communities. To come of age, to realize their potential and to resolve the crises threatening their tribes, both heroines need to abandon previous traditions and depart from their communities. Thus, although indigenous communities are romanticized they are simultaneously denigrated as they are shown as limiting the freedom and self-realization of the partly Westernized protagonists.

In conclusion, Disney’s ambiguous representations of indigenous people, in *Moana*, as previously in *Pocahontas*, remain arrested in the stereotypical dualism of Self and Other. Like Pickering, I believe that ethnotypical representations of the indigenous Other disclose much more about the Western Self “than about the apparently all-determined Other” (74). This can be observed in *Moana* and *Pocahontas* where Western concerns regarding environmental destruction are projected onto an indigenous setting and indigenous people are constructed in accordance with contemporary Western values such as gender-equality in *Moana*. Alongside the apprehension of the incomprehensible ‘primitive’ and the ambiguity and contradictions so typical in ethnotypes, Disney’s idealizing representations of the indigenous Other reveal Western uncertainties about modernity.

Since I have merely compared two Disney films, have mainly focused on the tropes of the ‘noble- and ignoble savage’ and have analyzed only a small number of sequences in detail, the scope of this study is relatively limited. Future projects could place more

emphasis on the self-representation of indigenous populations and contrast the increasing number of texts from indigenous authors with Western discourses on indigeneity using the analytical tools of stereotyping, ethnotyping and othering. As I have demonstrated, Disney's representations of indigenous peoples are not innocent but loaded with historical baggage and ethnotypically construct them as the West's Other.

Therefore, Disney films should be viewed with a certain measure of caution. Such a critical perspective could and should be incorporated into contemporary schools. In my future work as a teacher I am going to use Disney films in the classroom to raise awareness of stereotyping and foster my future students' ability to critically analyze and deconstruct today's all-pervasive media.

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Appendix

English Abstract

Due to its enormous reach, Disney is extremely influential in shaping the perspective of its audience regarding norms and values as well as ideas about other cultures and ethnicities. This study explores how the indigenous Other is represented in the Disney films *Moana* (2016) and *Pocahontas* (1995) and investigates the functions of these representations. The analysis of ethnotypes of indigenous peoples in both movies is conducted under the assumption that representations of indigeneity satisfy Western needs and portray Native Americans and Polynesians in contrast to the Western Self.

This study relies on a combination of theoretical concepts from stereotype research, imagology and othering. To provide a detailed understanding of representations of indigenous Others in *Moana* and *Pocahontas*, an intertextual analysis is conducted. In the intertextual analysis, I explore Western discourses on Native Americans and Polynesians and examine historical patterns and functions of representations of indigeneity, especially focusing on the tropes of the 'noble- and ignoble savage'. The textual analysis is based on Faulstich's film analysis model and is conducted following the approach of compositional analysis.

This study confirms that *Moana* and *Pocahontas* adhere to established ethnotypes of Western discourses on Polynesians and Native Americans. The indigenous Other is stereotypically juxtaposed with the Western Self through the construction of characters and the use of filmic devices, such as music, colors and camera angles. In both films, images of 'noble- and ignoble savages' prevail, catering to Western fantasies about exotic Others. The trope of 'ignobility' appears to convey notions of the 'superiority' of Western civilizations thereby justifying colonialism and imperialism and can be interpreted as a strategy of coming to terms with historical guilt. Idealized representations show Native Americans and Polynesians living in traditional, intimate communities and in harmony with nature. These utopian images constitute Western projections and can be interpreted as reflections of discontent with modernity and of anxieties regarding current ecological problems. *Moana* and *Pocahontas* are also both characterized by ambiguity as they not only idealize indigenous communities but

present them as obstacles to the individualism of Westernized protagonists. The results of this study demonstrate that *Moana* and *Pocahontas* stereotypically construct indigenous peoples as the West's Others, are far from innocent and, thus, should be watched cautiously.

German Abstract

Bedingt durch eine enorme Reichweite übt Disney einen besonders großen Einfluss auf Zuschauer aus, nicht nur was Normen und Werte betrifft, sondern auch im Bereich der Repräsentation von anderen Kulturen und Ethnien. Diese Studie untersucht, wie indigene Andere durch die Disneyfilme *Moana* (2016) und *Pocahontas* (1995) dargestellt werden und erforscht die Funktionen dieser Repräsentationen. Die Analyse der Ethnotype der in beiden Filmen dargestellten indigenen Gruppen erfolgt in der Annahme, dass Repräsentationen von indigenen Völkern westliche Bedürfnisse erfüllen und amerikanische Ureinwohner sowie Polynesier im Gegensatz zu einem westlichen Selbst darstellen.

Diese Untersuchung basiert auf einer Kombination von theoretischen Konzepten aus der Stereotypforschung, der Imagologie und *Othering*. Um ein detailliertes Verständnis der Repräsentationen indigener Anderer zu ermöglichen, erfolgt eine intertextuelle Analyse. In der intertextuellen Analyse untersuche ich westliche Diskurse zu amerikanischen Ureinwohnern und Polynesiern und erforsche historische Muster und Funktionen, welche Repräsentationen von indigenen Völkern prägen, wobei ich mich insbesondere auf die Tropen von dem ‚Edlen- und Unedlen Wilden‘ beziehe. Die Analyse des filmischen Texts basiert schließlich auf Faulstichs Modell zur Filmanalyse und wird mit Hilfe der Analyse der Bauformen durchgeführt.

Diese Studie belegt, dass *Moana* und *Pocahontas* an etablierten Ethnotypen westlicher Diskurse über Polynesier und amerikanische Ureinwohner festhalten. Indigene Andere werden einem westlichen Selbst durch die Konstruktion von Charakteren und mit Hilfe filmischer Mittel, wie Musik, Farben und Kamerawinkel, gegenübergestellt. In beiden Filmen überwiegen Bilder von ‚Edlen- und Unedlen Wilden‘, welche westliche Fantasien über exotische Andere bedienen. Der Tropus des ‚Unedlen Wilden‘ scheint Vorstellungen einer ‚Überlegenheit‘ westlicher ‚Zivilisationen‘ zu transportieren, rechtfertigt dadurch Kolonialismus und Imperialismus und kann als Strategie einer westlichen Vergangenheitsbewältigung interpretiert werden. Idealisierte Repräsentationen zeigen, wie amerikanische Ureinwohner und Polynesier in traditionellen, eng verflochtenen Gemeinschaften und in Harmonie mit der Natur leben. Diese utopischen Darstellungen sind westliche Projektionen und können als Ausdruck von Unzufriedenheit in Bezug auf Modernisierungsprozesse und als Manifestationen von Sorgen bezüglich gegenwärtiger ökologischer Probleme interpretiert werden. *Moana* und *Pocahontas* weisen zudem

Ambiguitäten auf, da indigene Gemeinschaften nicht nur idealisiert, sondern auch als Hindernisse für den Individualismus der verwestlichten Protagonistinnen dargestellt werden. Die Ergebnisse dieser Studie verdeutlichen, dass *Moana* und *Pocahontas* indigene Bevölkerungen in stereotyper Art und Weise als Andere des Westens konstruieren, daher alles and als harmlos sind und somit mit Vorsicht betrachtet werden sollten.



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